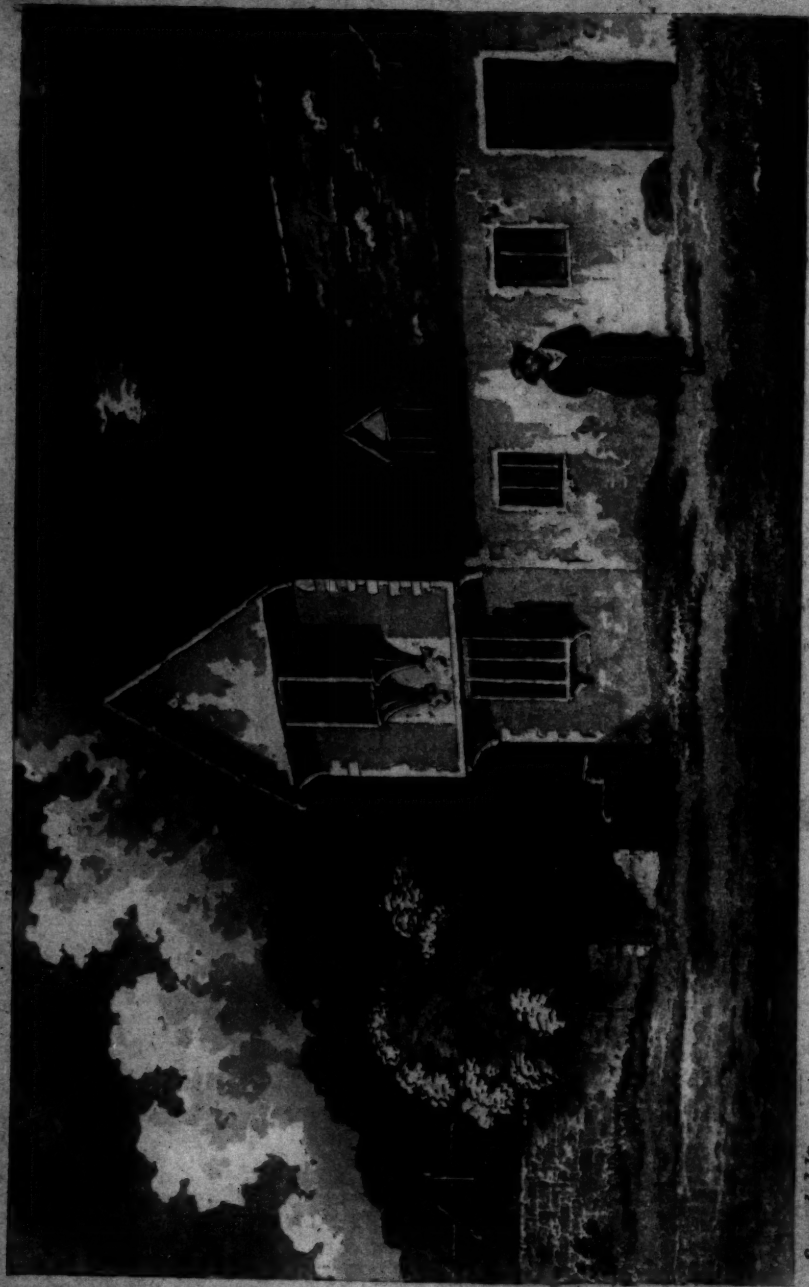


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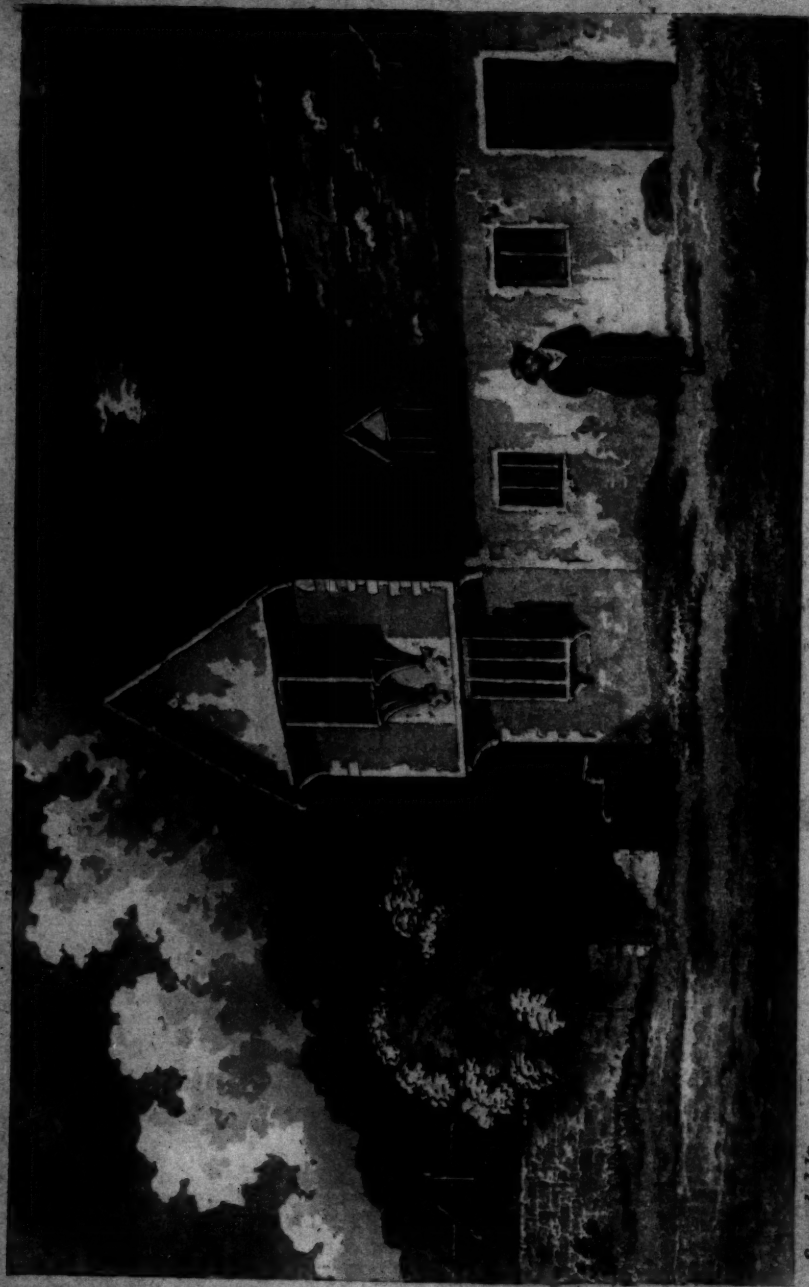


Samuel 227

Underwood Studio

College at Conway.

Frontispiece.



Samuel 227

Underwood Studio

College at Conway.

A
COLLECTION
OF
WELCH TOURS,

OR A
DISPLAY
Welsh OF THE *Tours*
BEAUTIES OF WALES,

K SELECTED PRINCIPALLY FROM
CELEBRATED HISTORIES
AND
POPULAR TOURS.

WITH
OCCASIONAL OBSERVATIONS
AND
REMARKS.

~~~~~  
" Proud of her ancient race, Britannia shows,  
" Where, in her WALES, another Eden glows,  
" And all her sons, to truth and honor dear,  
" Prove they deserve the Paradise they share."

MISS SEWARD.

~~~~~  
Embellished with fine Engravings.

LONDON:
Printed for G. SAELE, No. 192, STRAND, and Sold by
M. POOLE and Son, CHESTER.

1797.

Price 3s. 6d. Boards.

COLLECTION

WELSH TOURS

REMARKS ON

CELTIC HISTORY



BY

JOHN

1844

Printed by

LONDON

Printed by G. Smith, 10, Strand, and sold by

10, Strand, London

P R E F A C E.

SEVERAL of the most popular and interesting TOURS in WALES having become *scarce*, the present Editor has been induced to compress various selections from them into one volume, leaving each Tourist to pursue his respective track. He has availed himself also of the most respectable histories, and other private communications; for the latter of which, he begs to return his public acknowledgments.

To have digested the whole into one regular journey, might to some

travellers have appeared desirable; but in that case, much of the beauty and scenery of the country would have been unnoticed, from the external or internal situation of particular objects; whereas, by dividing it into separate sections, each route becomes more fully described. Hence, whoever may be desirous to make any part of the Tour of Wales, will almost everywhere find an excursion marked out, its antiquities and beauties described, with every other leading feature of local interest.

In the INDEX, the distinct Tours are pointed out; and in some instances, where authors may have differed in their narratives, it has been thought advisable to retain each description, for the sake of obtaining a more accurate account of
places

places. This will undoubtedly afford considerable novelty and utility to the work.

In exploring the picturesque beauties of WALES, it is hoped therefore that this little volume will be found essentially useful. It has been long allowed that no Country can boast of richer prospects, or encompass scenes of more historic celebrity.

N. B. Any communications for the improvement of a *future Edition* of these TOURS, will be gratefully acknowledged by the publisher, and duly attended to.

in the year 1800
the number of slaves and
the number of free people
of color in the United States

was 1,000,000
in 1810 it was 1,500,000
in 1820 it was 2,000,000
in 1830 it was 2,500,000
in 1840 it was 3,000,000
in 1850 it was 3,500,000
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in 2020 it was 12,000,000

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ROMANTIC

INTRODUCTION.

THE origin of every nation is necessarily obscure, and always lost in a pretended antiquity. On the authority of Bochart we may trace the Welch from Japhet, the son of Noah. That Britain, however, was peopled from Gaul 1000 years before Christ, appears very probable; the arguments in favour of this opinion are deduced from the state of population on the continent, and from the progress of it in the island itself. It has been well observed,*

* By Whitaker.

B

that

that names descriptive of national manners cannot be the original appellations of any people ; they result from the intercourse and experience of the states around them, on whose territories they have dared to incroach.

The name of Cymri appears to have been the great hereditary distinction of the Gauls upon the continent, and to have been carried with them into all their conquests ; it was not retained in our island merely by the natives of Wales, but was equally the appellation of a nation in the south-west of Somersetshire and the north-east of Cornwall.

The first denomination of our island was certainly Albion, a name given before the country was inhabited ; it was the Celtic term for heights or eminences. The Alps, some ages before the days of Strabo,
were

were called Albia; and in his time there remained two tribes on the mountains that bore the names of Albicæci and Albienses.

The second denomination was that of Britain, derived from a Celtic word likewise, signifying *divided*, not *painted*: this etymology has lately been proved not to have been applied to the region, but bestowed on the inhabitants; not previously borne on the continent by the original settlers of the country, but assumed or received at their first removal into the island.

The general denomination of Wales was not imposed on the country by the Saxons, but was the acknowledged appellation of the region as early as the sixth century, if we may believe a quotation from Talieffin, as cited by Mr. Davies.

Our knowledge of the Druids is still vague and unsatisfying, and must ever remain so, as they committed few things, if any, to writing, though they were certainly not unacquainted with letters; for, among the maxims collected by Gollet, there is one that forbids their mysteries to be written, a prohibition which could never have been given, had letters been entirely unknown: some curious particulars, however, may at least be traced from tradition, and others from specimens of their poetry that have been recited by the natives. As guardians of what they called true religion, they of course possessed the greatest authority among the people; no laws were instituted by the princes without their advice. They taught the immortality, and some say the transmigration, of the soul; a doctrine borrowed from the Pytha-

INTRODUCTION.

V

Pythagoreans, though Clemens Alexandrinus expressly asserts that the Pythagoreans borrowed that doctrine from them.

Once a year they, with their chief, an Arch-Druid, assembled at a fixed time and place to hear causes and determine all disputes; where their decisive court was held has never been determined, but most probably in Anglesea, as that island was certainly their metropolis. So great was the power of the Druids, that not only the property, but also the lives of the people were entirely at their disposal; and this power continued absolute till the time of Tiberius: it was afterwards suppressed by Claudius, under the fair pretext of abolishing human sacrifices; but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars subsisted, though in obscurity,

security, till the final destruction of Paganism.

When that part of Britain, which comprehends the present kingdom of England and principality of Wales, was divided into several petty kingdoms, the inhabitants were all distinguished by different names. The principality of Wales, formerly comprehending the whole country beyond the Severn, was in the Roman times occupied by the Silures, the Dimetæ, and Ordovices; to these belonged not only the twelve counties of Wales, but likewise the two others lying beyond the Severn, Herefordshire, and Monmouthshire, which in the reign of Charles the Second were first reckoned amongst the English counties.

The country now known by the name of North Wales was inhabited by the Ordovices only, who held
out

out first against the Romans, and afterwards against the English, after the other Britons were subdued ; for by the Romans they were not reduced till the time of Domitian, nor by the English till the reign of Henry the First.

About forty-five years before the Christian æra, Britain was first invaded by the Romans under Julius Cæsar ; afterwards by Claudius, and at length became a province under the Roman empire ; it was governed by lieutenants, or deputies, sent from Rome, as Ireland is now by deputies from England ; and continued thus under the Romans for upwards of 400 years ; till that empire being invaded by the Goths and Vandals, the Romans were forced not only to recall their own armies, but also to draw from hence the bravest of the

Britons, for their assistance against those barbarians.

The country being left in a defenceless state was invaded by the Scots, who were so rapacious, that the Britons sent over a miserable application for relief to Ætius, the Roman general, who, by several famous successes, for a time had repelled the violence of the Gothic arms; but, receiving no hopes of any succours from that general, the South Britons invited over the Saxons, who no sooner delivered them from their ancient foes the Picts and Scots, than they strengthened their own numbers, turned their arms against the natives, and conquered them, some few excepted, who secured themselves in the mountains of Wales; whence their descendants have always been distinguished by the title of Ancient Britons.

Wales

Wales was anciently bounded by the Irish seas, and by the rivers Severn and Dee, till the Saxons became masters of all the level countries over those rivers; and till *Offa*,* *King of Mercia*, made the celebrated trench, which is still called by his name. This trench, which extended from north to south; from the mouth of the river Dee to that of the Wye, has been thought to have been an imitation of the ramparts, which were thrown up by Agricola, Adrian, and Severus, to guard the Romans against the incursions of the northern barbarians.

Notwithstanding many attempts of the English, the Welch enjoyed their own laws, and lived under their own princes, till in the year 1282 Llewellyn lost both his principality and life. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, Wales was incorporated and

* See Tour from Chester, p. 56.

united with England; and, by a statute of the 27th of that reign, all laws and liberties of England were to take place there; from which time the Welch have approved themselves truly worthy of their high origin, loyal and dutiful to their King, and always zealous for the welfare of the community.

ROMANTIC

ROMANTIC PARTS
OF
NORTH WALES,
FROM
SHREWSBURY TO CAERNARVON,
AND THE
VALE of CLWYD.

B. 6.

ROMAN PARTS

NORTH WALES



B.C.

ROMANTIC PARTS
or
NORTH WALES.

THE romantic beauties of nature are so singular and extravagant in the principality of Wales, particularly in the counties of Merioneth and Caernarvon, that they are scarcely to be conceived by those who have confined their curiosity to the other parts of Great Britain.

This journey was undertaken rather late in the autumn; the season proved remarkably favourable; neither rains nor winds impeded my progress—the air on the mountains was left rarified by the summer's heat, the sun shone out all the day on Cader, and Snowdon, had not begun

gun to fortify himself against this almost winter approach.

I set out from Shrewsbury to Welch Poole—the last eight miles afforded a most beautiful prospect of a rich vale in Montgomeryshire. The vales throughout this county are remarkably pleasant, abound with corn, and are luxuriant in pasturage.

Welch Poole is a place of some note—it is one of the five boroughs in Montgomeryshire, which jointly send a member to Parliament. It takes its name from a contemptible black pool, which is said to be unfathomable.

About a mile from hence stands Powis castle, or *Red* castle, from the colour of the stones of which it is built. The situation of it is certainly very noble; but I cannot agree with Lord Lyttleton, that three thousand pounds would make it the most august

gust place in the kingdom: there is much to be done in the mere approach, and at present you are obliged to ask where the Severn runs. The ground is laid out in that formal style of gardening that was brought in at the Revolution, and there will be much difficulty in altering it with propriety.

On my return to Poole, I ordered a carriage to convey me to Llanvair; this was to be my last stage on known ground—the road was perfectly good, the people in general spoke English, and their civility was so remarkable, that the very turnpike man was grateful for the toll. I was here most strongly recommended to a good house, about twelve miles distant, but found it only a miserable hut; I therefore pressed onwards as fast as possible, and after some difficulties arrived at Dynys-Mouthy.

This

This city (for dynys is Welch for city) is possessed of many and great advantages; there is no body corporate to divide it into faction, there is not a single office that can possibly be contended for—the rent of houses will be the same at all seasons, and even in August you are never incommoded by the sun. The river is not large, but it will never be incroached upon by the inhabitants; their sequestered walks will never be injured by any fresh dealers in taste.

I did not see a cathedral, nor heard of either bishop or palace.

There is no court of judicature open here.

The theatre is held in great repute. I had the pleasure to be present at one play, which is here called an *anterlute*, probably a corruption from our term interlude. The piece was said to have been written by a celebrated
Mr.

Mr. Evan something, who lived at Bala.

The road from Dynys-Mouthy afforded but little amusement, and the first cast of Cader Idris greatly disappointed me; but I soon recollected, that as I was then on high ground, it must have been from some other point of view that this mountain had rendered itself so remarkable. In the course of this reflection, I was on a sudden delighted with the country round Dolgelly; woods, rocks, a rich vale, a fine river, and, at that distance, the appearance of rather a decent town, surrounded with many gentlemen's seats; these, contrasted with the barrenness I had just travelled through, all joined to render the prospect truly delicious.

At the inn there was nothing to be obtained; so that as soon as possible

fible I sent out for a guide, that I might retire to the mountains. Whilst I was in waiting, I inquired about the only tolerable building I then saw, and was told it was for *cock-matches*, such as we had in England; that they were just over, but that I might go immediately and see a famous man from London shew *tricks of slight of hand*.

On the arrival of the guide, I set out immediately for Cader Idris, and found the tract exceedingly good, till I came to a prominent part of the mountain, and here, I must acknowledge, my head was too giddy sufficiently to admire the amazing scene that was opening to my view. At length having gained the summit (the whole ascent being near three miles) on a fine piece of level ground, I could with comfort survey the sea, the Caernarvonshire shore, Snowdon without

without a cloud upon his top; lakes, rivers, rocks, and precipices, which were every way spread before me; at the bottom of the hill, on the opposite side, was a small village, to which several were returning heavy laden from Dolgelly market; this village is remarkable for nothing but the remains of a small castle, whose miserable situation could not secure it from the depredations of Cromwell's army. In the course of my survey of the mountain, it seemed to take a thousand capricious forms; but the most wonderful part of it is the tremendous peak, which overhangs the lake of the * Three Grains: but here I shall forbear description, as a fine representation of

* The common people believe these three large crags to have been cast out of the shoes of the giant Idris.

it has been lately executed by the ingenious and accurate pencil of Mr. Wilson. On my return I discovered, far out of any tract, on the steepest part of the hill, a man gathering rock-moss to dye baizes red. This excrescence is chiefly sold to Dublin; it affords a most beautiful colour at first, and if mixed with proper ingredients and distilled, will, it is said, become permanent. Being very thirsty with heat and fatigue, I inquired for some goat's milk, but to no purpose; the guide, however, informed me, that he could procure me from a neighbouring cottage a liquor peculiar to that part of North Wales, which infinitely exceeded Stirom cyder; I tasted it, and found it was made of mountain-ash berries and crabs or floes; it should remain at least half a year in the vessel before it is bottled off, and
if

if it were then kept to a proper age, it would not be altogether contemptible. The tediousness of my return to Dolgelly was somewhat beguiled by the consequential information of the guide, and I must own he greatly entertained me.

The next morning being Sunday, I went to eight o'clock prayers here; the area of the church is spacious, and the pews neat; there is a coving roof of wood, which is necessary to aid the voice, as the floor is only clay covered with deep rushes; the congregation was large, and the service was read with devotion and tolerable propriety.

My stay was prolonged at Dolgelly, that the master of the inn, who was absent on my first arrival, and who was justly recommended to me as an intelligent person, might attend me to see the three wonderful

water-falls in this neighbourhood ; one of them is in so obscure a place, that the minister of an adjoining parish, whom I afterwards met with, had never till that time even heard of it. About five miles on the road towards Tan y Bwlch, we turned on the left hand to see the first, which I take to be a part of the river Dery ; this is not more than fifty feet in height, but you may afterwards trace it for near mile, through crags and trees, before it reaches its rocky bed at the bottom ; the others are falls of whole rivers, the Mothwaye and the Cayne, over the tops of two rocky mountains ; the former perhaps may not be above one hundred feet in height, but the latter is certainly at least an hundred yards ; both of them are shaded with beautiful woods on the sides of hills, whose summits are in the clouds, and

and whose feet are whitened by the foam of these tremendous cataracts.

I was much struck with the situation of Mrs. Griffith's house at Tan y Bwlch ; at first sight it somewhat resembled Matlock Bath ; but the hills in front are thrown to a fine distance, and behind the house they are covered with wood. Through a very spacious valley the river Dryryd runs, and from the tops of the mountains are frequent and not inconsiderable cataracts ; indeed, most of the romantic prospects of North Wales, taken separately, are infinitely superior to those of Derbyshire ; but where shall we find, within the same distance, such amazing contrast as the high polish of Kedleston opposed to the bleak horrors of the Peak ?

At the distance of about three miles (the road most beautifully diversified)

verified) the scene changes on a sudden to some dark and naked precipices; at the bottom is a large rocky basin, which receives the Rhaidr-du, or Black Cataract, as it is called.

The road to Harlech afforded great variety; there could scarce be more within the compass of ten miles. For the first three we surveyed "the Happy Valley;"* we then passed by a beautiful lake, and having gained the next mountain, saw the castle, situated on a high rock, which projects into the Irish sea. It must be confessed, however, that the last two miles were rather "a stair-case path;" but I have frequently travelled for twenty miles together in the midland counties of England with more danger and difficulty. In Wales one has the pleasure of seeing

* Vide Johnson's *Rasselas*.

that they are making daily improvements in roads.

Harlech stands on the north-west side of the county of Merioneth; its houses are mean. There is a good harbour for ships, but no ships for the harbour. It is remarkable only for its old decayed castle, which was defended by a British nobleman against Edward the Fourth, till an Earl of Pembroke, after almost incredible difficulties, compelled it to surrender. It has been confidently asserted, that this castle was built before Edward the First's time, and that all he did was the making some additions, especially to the fortifications; but I should be rather inclined to think that it was planned at least by Edward. A tradition goes, that the workmen, after they had got to a considerable height, were all taken off to build

C

build the castles of Aberystwith and Caernarvon; and, indeed, there are evident marks of a separation.

An unpolished people, it is observed, have little or no curiosity; I had seated myself by the fire-side in one of the houses at Harlech, without the inhabitants expressing the least surprise at it; the guide and attendants began to be rather clamorous for some refreshment, and the people at length brought them some oatmeal bread, &c.

From Harlech a fresh guide conducted me over the top of the mountain, and I found an entire good road on my return to Tan y Bwlch.

Leaving my little inn there with regret, I passed a dreary cloud-capt country, till I came to a road which, for near a mile, was cut through a barren rock, and finely preparative for the scene that was to open upon me.

me. On a sudden I came upon Pont Aberglaslyn, the bridge that divides the counties of Merioneth and Caernarvon. It consists of only one wide stone arch, thrown over a considerable water-fall, from two perpendicular precipices ; beyond it is a semicircle of rock, which forms a salmon-leap, above which, in spawning time, the fish frequently attempt to lodge themselves, at the amazing height of five or six yards ; they are frequently caught here in the season with nets, and sometimes with spears that are barbed for the purpose ; but having passed the bridge, how shall I express my feelings ! the dark tremendous precipices, the rapid river roaring over disjointed rocks, black caverns, and issuing cataracts ; all serve to make this the noblest specimen of the horrid the eye can possibly behold : the poet has not de-

scribed, nor the painter pictured so gloomy a retreat.

Having staid too long in contemplating this amazing pass, I posted as fast as possible over a rocky desert to gain some refreshment at Bethkelert; the blacksmith's house appearing the neatest, I alighted, and was able to obtain two eggs, which might here be considered as a most luxurious repast. At Tan y Bwlch I had been informed, that I should really meet with very decent accommodations at Bettus, and might with comfort take up my abode there for an evening. As I travelled, I reflected on Burnet's Description of a part of Caernarvonshire, that it was "the fragment of a demolished world;" and on making some slight observation to the guide of the dreariness that surrounded me, "Aye, master," says he, "this must have been an
" ancient

“ ancient country indeed, for you
“ see it is worn out to the very
“ stones ;” this remark, however,
is probably rather good than new ;
but we are now arrived at Bettus,
and the guide pointed to the house
where I was to get lodging and
entertainment. In such a situa-
tion, only one question could pro-
perly be asked, which was, how
many miles to Caernarvon ? Finding
the distance only six miles, I deter-
mined to hazard it. I must own I
did here expatiate a little on recom-
mendations, and said it was impos-
sible that the guide, as well as the
mistress of the inn at Tan y Bwlch,
could be so intolerably mistaken ;
the man apologized with great frank-
ness, that he did not think the house
altogether so bad, as my Honour
would have been sure to have gotten
some good ale.

Within three miles of Caernarvon I was agreeably surpris'd with a very fine road, and a new bridge, which will open a free communication with these unfrequented regions, and induce the curious to visit the wonders of the British Alps, in preference to the mountains of Switzerland, or the Glacières of Savoy.

I pass'd my evening at a very good inn at Caernarvon, and having procur'd an intelligent guide, return'd early next morning through Bettus to the foot of Snowdon.— Having left my horses at a small hut, and hired a mountaineer to carry some cordials and provisions, with a spiked stick, but imprudently without nails in my shoes, about ten o'clock I began to ascend the mountain. The two first miles were rather boggy and disagreeable; but, when the prospect opened, I soon forgot

forgot all difficulties:—in the course of the two last I passed by six precipices, which I believe were very formidable; but as I was near the brink, and the wind very high, I did not venture to examine too narrowly. On the summit, which is a plain about six yards in circumference, the air was perfectly mild and serene, and I could with pleasure contemplate the amazing map that was unfolded to my view. From thence may be distinctly seen, Wicklow hills in Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and part of Scotland; all the counties of North Wales, the Isle of Anglesea; rivers, plains, woods, rocks, and mountains, six and twenty lakes, and two seas; it is doubted whether there is another circular prospect so extensive in any part of the terraqueous globe. Who

could take such a survey, without perceiving his spirits elevated in some proportion to the height? Who could behold so bountiful a display of nature without wonder and ecstasy? Who but must feel even a degree of pride from having gained an eminence, from which he could with ease overlook the nest of the eagle?

But as the level walks of life are best suited to the generality of mankind, it became necessary to consider that this was no spot where I could properly make any lasting abode, and that the return would be attended with at least as much difficulty as the ascent. Having descended a mile or two, I did not think it amiss to inquire about an exhausted mine that I saw at a distance; and I could make this inquiry with the better grace, as the guides had hitherto quite wondered

dered at my prowess; the mine I was informed was only copper.

At the foot of Snowdon I turned about half a mile out of the way to see a water-fall; the side-rock was exceedingly beautiful, but the cataract itself was rather contemptible, after the noble ones I had seen in the neighbourhood of Dolgelly. As the guides seemed to think a floating island, about two miles distant, was a most wonderful phænomenon, and related many singular and surprising tales concerning it, I indulged their credulity so far as to go and inspect it. The lake, as they called it, was somewhat bigger than a common duck-pond; and the island was a knotty piece of bog, which, after very heavy rains, might very possibly float in it.

On my return to Caernarvon I examined the town and castle. The

town was built by the command of Edward the First, out of the ruins of the ancient city of Segontium, that stood a little below it : it is situated between two rivers, and has a beautiful prospect of the Isle of Anglesea ; it was formerly of very great account when the Princes of Wales kept their chancery and exchequer courts there. On the west side of it stands the castle, which was built to curb the Welch mountaineers, and secure a passage to the opposite shore. In a part of it, called the Eagle Tower, you are shewn the remains of a chamber in which Edward the Second * is said to have been born ;

* The cradle of that weak, wicked, unfortunate Prince is still preserved ; it is now in the possession of a clergyman in Gloucestershire, to whom it descended from one of his ancestors, who attended the Prince in his infancy.

about ten years after his birth it was besieged by the Welch, but it was afterwards repaired; and both the town and castle had divers privileges confirmed to them by different sovereigns, down to the reign of Elizabeth; during the last civil war they were held for King Charles, but were afterwards surrendered on conditions to the Parliament. On viewing these spacious ruins, I could only ruminate on the changes they had undergone; to think that those walls, which heretofore resounded with acclamations on the birth of the first English Prince of Wales, should now afford shelter only to a few miserable cottages, from the tempestuous blasts of the Bristol channel!

I made several excursions into the Isle of Anglesea, the well-known seat of the Druids: this may now be considered as classical ground;

for though Mona is destroyed, and her altars abolished; though fires have consumed her groves, and her priests have perished by the sword, yet, like the Phoenix, she rises more glorious from decay; her ashes have given birth to the Caractacus of Ma-son, and the fate of her bards to the inspiration of Gray.

Nothing could be more delightful than the ride from Caernarvon to Bangor; to the right hand were Snowdon Hills, and to the left the river Menai, or, more properly speaking, the Strait between the continent and the Island of Anglesea; I had now got into day-light and the polite world again: there had been a diversion the night before at Caernarvon, and the road was covered over with carriages.

Bangor lies at the north end of the same frith, or arm of the sea, which
is

is the passage to Anglesea, where it has a harbour for boats. It was once so large as to be called Bangor the Great, and was defended with a powerful castle, built by Hugh Earl of Chester, which has long since been demolished. The town is now of very little note, except for being the see of a bishop; the palace is neat, but deplorably situated: this is doubly mortifying in a country where every part of the neighbourhood is picturesque and pleasing.

Between Bangor and Conway I passed over the famous mountain called Penmaen Mawr; the road must formerly have been very frightful, but a wall is now built to the sea side, to which it is said the city of Dublin very largely contributed: to form this road it has already cost upwards of two thousand pounds.

From

From hence the country opens into a plain, which extends as far as the river Conway, the eastern limit of the county of Caernarvon. It rises out of a lake of the same name, and runs with a north-west course, receiving in the short space of twelve miles more than as many rivers; so that at Aberconway, where it discharges its waters into the Irish Sea, it is full a mile broad, and capable of bringing ships of almost any size up to the town: at present Conway bears only some melancholy marks of what it once was.

The castle still remains one of the noblest monuments of antiquity; it is built in the same stile with that of Caernarvon, but is far more regular. The outside is the same as in the time of Edward the First, except one tower, and that was not demolished with either battering engines or cannons,

nons, but by the people of the place taking stones from the foundation of it. Some remains of the principal rooms are still to be seen, the dimensions of which have been accurately given by Lord Lyttleton, and an elegant view of them in Antiquities by Mr. Grose; but I had never seen the outside of this most venerable ruin to advantage, had I not walked over some polished ground about a quarter of a mile from it, which I believe belongs to a gentleman of Conway: there you see the castle finely sheltered by an oak wood; on one side *the chief of rivers* opening into the Irish sea, and on the other the mountains surrounding Penmaen, with a distant country most beautifully diversified. Art and nature cannot combine to form a more various and more delicious prospect.

I could

I could not possibly leave this part of the country without seeing the vale of Llanryst, the bridge built by Inigo Jones, and the chapel supposed to have been planned by him, which contains the rich monuments of the Guedir family. The vale, upon the whole, I thought inferior to that I had seen in Montgomeryshire; but the bridge is certainly a very elegant structure, and speaks itself to be the work of a great architect, most probably of Jones; for I incline to the opinion that Llanryst was the place of his nativity.

The chapel, which adjoins the parish church, was erected by Sir Richard Wynne, one of the grooms of the bedchamber to Charles the First when Prince of Wales, and was chiefly made use of for the alms-house in the neighbourhood, which was endowed by the Guedir family.

On

On the floor are four brass plates, with drawings of figures upon each of them in the dresses of the times; one of Maria Mostyn, wife of Roger Mostyn; another of Sir Owen Wynne, another of Sir John Wynne, and a fourth of Lady Sydney Wynne, wife of Sir John Wynne. And in the corner of the chapel a stone coffin, which was removed from the abbey of Conway, about two miles from hence, on which is the following inscription:

This is the coffin of Leolinus Magnus, Prince of Wales, who was buried in the abbey of Conway, and upon the dissolution removed from thence.

On each side are six carved recesses in the figure of flower de luces, which bear evident marks of having contained brass plate, and two at the bottom of the coffin.

There

There is now erected in the church a gallery of exquisite workmanship, which was removed likewise from the abbey; and I was at the trouble of having a large quantity of rubbish taken away from under an old staircase, that I might inspect a stone effigy, which is said to be of Hoel Coetmore, who sold the Guedir estate to the Wynne family: the word *guedir* is supposed to signify glass, and that family probably was the first who in these parts had a house with glazed windows.

I made diligent inquiry through all Caernarvonshire, and this part of Denbighshire, for the Glyder Mountain, which Gibson has particularly described, and which, from its singularity (say the authors of a *Tour through Wales*), we more wished to have seen than the summits of either Plinlimmon or Snowdon.

“ On

“ On the utmost top of this mountain, according to the continuator of Camden, who saw it, is a prodigious pile of stones, many of which are of the magnitude of those at Stonehenge. They lie in such an irregular manner, crossing and supporting each other, that some people have imagined them to be the remains of a vast building ; but Gibson more naturally supposes them to be the skeleton or ruins of the mountain ; the weaker parts of which may have been worn away in a series of ages, by the rains and meltings of the snow.”

I was equally unfortunate in not being able to see this mountain ; but, in crossing the wide ferry at Conway, I by accident gained such information, that I am confident any future traveller may very readily satisfy his curiosity ;

curiosity ; an old boatman there informed me, that he had frequently seen it—that in his younger days, indeed, it was sometimes termed the Glyder, but it was now known only by the name of Wythwar—that it was within a mile or two of a village called Clynog, and upon the shore almost opposite to Caernarvon.

On my way to St. Asaph, I passed over the top of Penmaen Rofs, a steep and formidable mountain ; this is by far the worst part of the road between Holyhead and Chester : a nearer path was some time since cut along the side of the sea cliff ; but a man and horse had lately been killed, and by order of the commissioners it is now entirely broken up.

The city of St. Asaph is called in British Llan Elwy, on account of its situation at the conflux of the river Elwy with the Clwyd ; and St.
Asaph

Asaph by the English, from its patron Asaph, who in the year 560 erected a bishop's see there. The bishop of this diocese has no entire county under his jurisdiction, but parts only of the counties of Flint, Denbigh, Montgomery, Merioneth, and Salop.

The cathedral has since been several times rebuilt; having been burnt in 1402 by Owen Glendwr, it was afterwards restored by Bishop Redman; but, having suffered the dilapidations of time, was lately repaired and beautified under the direction of Mr. William Turner.

The bishop's palace has been entirely rebuilt by the present worthy diocesan, Dr. Bagot.

The beauties of the Vale of Clwyd, which now opens to the eye of the traveller, are not surpassed, perhaps not equalled, by any other *vale in the kingdom.*

dom. It is probably seen to the greatest advantage from the hills in the neighbourhood of Ruthin. Though near the road to Holywell, you have the best view I think of that fertile and delicious vale: it is of an oval shape, about twenty-five miles in length, and about eight miles wide in its broadest part; it lies open only to the ocean, and to the clearing north wind, being elsewhere guarded with high mountains, which, towards the east especially, are like battlements or turrets; for, by an admirable contrivance of nature, says Camden, the tops of these mountains resemble the turrets of walls. Upon the whole, however, I think that there are other cultivated scenes in North Wales equal, if not superior. In the Vale of Clwyd, indeed, you have the lively and the beautiful; but in Montgomeryshire, the awful and sublime.

TOUR

TOUR

FROM

CHESTER TO LLANGOLLEN,

WELCH POOLE, and MONMOUTH.



T O U R
FROM
CHESTER to LLANGOLLEN
AND
MONMOUTH.

WHOEVER is inclined to make the Tour of Wales from Chester will not only be highly recompensed in viewing that ancient City, but much gratified with the ride from thence to Wrexham, twelve miles in distance.

A little on the left of the road, near Belgrave, is the seat of the ancient and respectable family of the Grosvenors; indeed, the ride may be
D taken

taken immediately past his Lordship's house, along the extensive park side, returning into the high road at Belgrave. About three miles farther is Marford hill, which, for extent of prospect, is scarcely surpassed; from this place, Cheshire looks, as it has often been described, the *Garden of England*, being well supplied with wood in every part, and adorned by the richest cultivation.

Bolsworth castle and the Peckforten hills greatly enrich the scene; and, if the weather is fine, a considerable part of Lancashire and Derbyshire may be seen from this point.

A little beyond Marford is the pleasant village of Gresford, the bells of which church have been denominated one of the *wonders of Wales*; for sweetness and harmony they are allowed to exceed any in that quarter. This may be attributed to the echo of

the vale below, which reverberates the sound, and often gives the effect of a double peal.

In the sequestered vale adjoining Gresford, is the cottage of Mrs. W. of Chester; its simplicity and beauty have tempted many a traveller to view the scene, few of whom ever felt regret at having deviated from the common path. It is here that Contemplation may retire within herself, and for a moment forget the world and its follies; while Virtue delights to meet her retired associate.

About a mile on this side Wrexham, to the left of the road, is Acton; the seat of Sir F. Cunliffe. The garden is beautifully laid out, but the prospect confined. The venerable grove, leading to the house, near half a mile in extent, has a noble appearance. To the right of the road from hence to Wrexham, there

are several respectable houses, whose gardens display taste and judgment in an abundant degree.

Wrexham is a handsome and well-built town, surrounded with an inclosed and fertile country. The church is large, and was erected in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The tower is 140 feet high, and is a beautiful specimen of the florid or reformed Gothic; which taste began to prevail about the time of that king, when the windows were made broader, and less pointed at the top, their arches being more rounded at their springs, and ending with an obtuser angle.

Amongst other monuments that reflect high credit on the sculptor, and catch the eye of the traveller who may view this church, is that of Mrs. Mary Middleton, by Roubilliac, which Miss *Seward* has thus

thus distinguished in her verses on Wrexham.

“Bright as in Albion’s long distinguished fanes,
“Within these holy walls, she lives, she reigns;
“Her *fainted maid*, amid the bursting tomb,
“Hears the *last trumpet* thrill its murky gloom,
“With smile triumphant over *death* and time
“Lifts the rapt eye, and rears the form sublime.”

I believe there are few persons who have visited Wrexham, without taking a ride to Erthig, about two miles from thence, the seat of P. York, Esq. The gardens are very extensive, and a great display of taste and judgment may be discovered throughout the whole. Perhaps Wales cannot boast of a more elegant spot. The house is a modern handsome building.

Not far distant from Wrexham, is Offa’s Dyke, which is very visible on each side the road: it was thrown up by order of Offa, King

of the Mercians, in the eighth century, as a boundary between his and the British territories. This dyke began at Basingwerk in Flintshire, and ended at Chepstow, being a line of more than 150 miles.

On the left hand of the road, near Ruàbon, is the splendid mansion of Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, which has been long revered by that town and neighbourhood for the hospitality of its owner. The park is very extensive, and the ride to the house picturesque and delightful: the building is modern.

Ruàbon is but a small town, and affords no novelty or interest for the curious traveller.

Llangollen is a town, romantically situated in a small dale, closely environed with mountains, which are finely varied with woods, rocks, and torrents. On the point
of

of one of them, just above the town, are the ruins of the castle Dinas Brân, once inhabited by the lovely lady *Mifanwy Vechan*, of the house of Tudor Trevor. She was beloved by the bard *Hoel*.

Gray, speaking of the massacre among the bards, in the time of Edward the First, describes this scene as

“Vocal no more, since Cambria’s fatal day,
“To high-born HOEL’s harp, or soft Llewellyn’s
“lay.”

In Miss *Seward*’s celebrated poem of *Llangollen Vale*, she thus speaks of Dinas Brân castle :

“’Mid the gay towers on steep Din’s Branna’s
“cone,
“Her Hoel’s breast the fair *Mifanwy* fires,
“O! harp of Cambria, never hast thou known
“Notes more mellifluent floating o’er the wires,
“Than when thy bard this brighter Laura sung,
“And with his ill-starr’d love LLANGOLLEN’S
“echos rung.”

The beautiful cottage of the Right Hon. Lady *E. Butler* and Miss *Ponsonby* is situated in this vale, a quarter of a mile from the town of Llangollen. This picturesque retreat comprises, in an extent of little more than two acres, every rural grace. Woods and mountains rise magnificently around it, but not too near to destroy that air of lightness and comfort which it breathes. Justly is this lovely villa called in Miss Seward's Poem,

“The fairy palace of the vale.”

These ladies have rather chosen to make this secluded spot their abode, than to mingle in the gay scenes of life, setting an example of all that is elegant in manners, and lovely in virtue, to the surrounding inhabitants. For a more minute representation of the characters of these amiable

amiable ladies, I must refer my readers to the elegant poem of *Llangollen Vale*, inscribed to them by Miss Seward.

The Rev. Mr. Roberts of Dinbren has lately added largely to his paternal house, situated on a noble mountain in this vale; the house stands near its craggy summit, and looks as if it had been scooped out of the rocks.

In this vale also is the beautiful and celebrated ruin of *Valle Crucis Abby*, situated amidst a surrounding landscape of woods and mountains, sublime and awfully impressive.

Miss Seward, in the Poem before mentioned, has the following striking apostrophe to this noble object.

" Say ivied *Valle Crucis*, time decay'd,

" Dim on the brink of Deva's wandering floods,

" Your riv'd arch glimmering thro' the tangled glade,

" Your gray hills towering o'er your night of
" woods,

" Deep in the vale's recesses do you stand,

" And desolately great, the rising sigh command."

The river Dee is a noble object, as seen from the bridge at Llangollen: it rages furiously down the broad, shelving, solid rock, which is worn to a kind of glossy polish by the waters of this considerable river sinking at once into one channel, scarcely a yard broad, and of unfathomable depth, leaving the rest of the bed of the river composed of massy and pointed rock, entirely dry, except in large floods. The concentrated stream foams with velocity through a single arch of the bridge.

We now ascended the long narrow ridge of a mountain, which soon brought us within sight of Chirk castle.

The ancient outward walls and towers of this castle still remain, but the court or quadrangle has at different times been made habitable: the apartments range all around it, and

and the principal suite of rooms are grand, and handsomely fitted up in the modern fashion.

Chirk castle was founded by Roger Mortimer in the thirteenth century, who usurped large possessions in this country from his Welch ward. It stands on a lofty eminence, commanding a rich and extensive view over part of the counties of Cheshire and Shropshire, and nearly in the centre of a park, which the proprietor, Mr. Middleton, is now levelling and forming to the present taste.

From hence a melancholy ride, over a lonesome, mountainous heath, will lead into the vale of Llanrhaidr.

From Llanrhaidr it may be worth while to ride along the bank of the river, on the north side, for nearly five miles, to see the noble cataract, cal-

led, by way of eminence, Pistill Rhaidr: Rhaidr means a cataract, and the river is so called on account of the rapidity of its torrent; Pistill signifies a water-spout.

On our approach towards it, neither the size of the river, nor the first view of the fall, which we saw at the distance of two miles, gave us any idea answerable to our expectations; but as we advanced, a noble theatre of naked perpendicular rock opened its grand semicircle to our sight: in the middle of it fell the Pistill Rhaidr, in a large body of water, from the amazing height of two hundred and forty feet.

Powis castle stands about a mile above the town: the gardens are laid out in extensive parallel terraces, hanging over each other, in the taste introduced by King William, and bordered

bordered with fantastic yews, and other formal ever-greens.

The castle is still inhabited, but has more the appearance of a long-neglected mansion than that of a comfortable house.

We crossed the Severn about two miles from Welch Poole, over a long narrow bridge, and soon reached the neat little town of Montgomery.

On our approach to it, the town, and the castle above, situated on a high rock, the side of which, towards the town, is thinly chequered with trees, and presented a very picturesque view.

Leaving Montgomery, we soon descended into a beautiful valley, diversified with the Severn meadows and pastures, and bounded, on each side of the river, with moderate hills, generally mantled with wood.

There

There are no remains of the castles of Delevorn and Caerfufe, in the vicinity of Newtown; the intrenchment of the first appeared to us, from the opposite side of the Severn, in our road through the valley.

The houses are here generally framed with timber, and the intermediate parts are fenced from the weather with laths and plaster.

Newtown is built in this manner, which, in other respects, is a neat town, agreeably situated on the Severn's bank, at the extremity of the valley before described.

Four miles carried us to the summit of a mountain, the ascent to which begins at Newtown: the path over this mountain is intricate and boggy; but we were fortunate enough to find it, though the disagreeable uncertainty of being in the right track preyed upon our spirits for many miles.

miles. We afterwards dipped into two or three Radnorshire dales, and arrived at Llandrindod.

We had many views of old intrenchments from this route; but they afforded a small relief to the tediousness of crawling through vile roads and a melancholy waste.

The wells of Llandrindod are situated in a wild extensive heath, some spots of which are rarely enlivened with a few trees, and small cultivated inclosures. The mountains bound the dreary prospect at a distance.

The lodging-house is tolerably contrived for the reception of company, and, in a fine summer, is frequently full.

We crossed the Wye at Builth, which brought us into Brecknockshire.

Builth

Builth is a small town, situated in a broad and pleasant plain ; it was in this neighbourhood that Prince Llewellyn was slain in a wood, after a desperate contest between the British and English forces, at a bridge upon the river Yrvon, wherein the former at length were entirely routed.

We passed through Builth on a market day, and our ride through the crowds in the street was attended with some difficulty. It at first amazed us to see the fullness of these weekly meetings in such little towns, as they appeared more like large fairs than common markets. We could scarcely conceive, from the general wildness of the country, that it could have possibly produced such numerous assemblies.

From Builth we rode over another long, lonesome, and boggy mountain, from which we descended into
a plea-

a pleasant valley, and good turnpike road, about five miles from Brecknock.

Brecknock is a large handsome town, situated on a fine rising above the Uske.

The turnpike now follows the current of the Uske, being commonly within view of it, through a delicious vale, which is diversified with pastures, woods, and mountains; the lands are wholly cultivated to the best advantage, and are well inhabited.

The environs of Abergavenny, in Monmouthshire, are rich and beautiful, and, like the rest of the vale from Brecknock, abound with the most charming variety of landscape. The prospects are terminated at proper distances with mountains, among which at the opposite sides of the town,

town, Skirid vawr and Blorench raise their conspicuous heads.

The town has a few good houses scattered in it, but in general the streets are narrow, ill paved, and ill built. Some of the walls, and part of the tower on the keep, are the only remains of a once flourishing Norman castle.

Just above the little parish of Llandewi, four miles below Llantony, is a remarkable mountain, the sides of which have, at different times, been broken from it, and now lie in immense fragments underneath, having left a long perpendicular precipice more than 100 feet high.

We could learn no particulars about these separations of the rock, though, from the apparent freshness of some of the fallen pieces, the last does not seem to be very ancient.

The

The country still continues to wear the same rich dress as about Abergavenny, even to Monmouth, with the difference only, that it is now more enlarged, and unconfined with mountains.

Ragland castle, which lies partly in in the road, is a magnificent ruin; the magnitude of it, and the large remains, are uncommonly striking.

This castle was built by Sir W. Thomas and his son William, Earl of Pembroke, beheaded at Banbury. It came into the noble family of Worcester by Sir Charles Somerset's marrying Elizabeth, the grandchild of the said William, Earl of Pembroke, heir to his son William, Earl of Huntingdon, and heir-general to all the Herberts in England. This Sir Charles Somerset was the first Earl of Worcester of this line.

Camden

Camden calls Ragland a fair house of the Earl of Worcester's, built castle-like.

The extensive outworks were added by the Marquis of Worcester, in the civil wars; and he fortified them in such a manner, that he was enabled to hold Ragland for King Charles till his imprisonment at Holmby.

This castle had the honour of being the last which surrendered to the all-powerful forces of the Parliament.

It is greatly to the honour of the Duke of Beaufort, the proprietor of this castle, that he has endeavoured to preserve from destruction all the remains of religious and military architecture of which he is the possessor.

Tintern abbey, Chepstow, and Ragland castles, all in this county, are in-

instances of his laudable veneration for antiquity, which deservedly excites the gratitude of every curious traveller, who must often lament, in his Welch tour, that this noble example is too rarely imitated.

The Editor having been favoured with the following portrait of Welch hospitality and manners, gives it as a specimen of the magnificence of those days.

List of the Household and Method of living at RAGLAND CASTLE, by the Earl of WORCESTER, in the Reign of CHARLES I. 1641.

AT eleven o'clock in the forenoon the castle gates were shut, and the tables laid; two in the dining-room; three in the hall; one in Mrs. Watson's apartment, where the chaplains

eat

eat (Sir Toby Mathews being the first); and two in the housekeeper's room, for the ladies' women.

The Earl entered the dining-room, attended by his gentlemen. As soon as he was seated, Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward of the house, retired. The comptroller, Mr. Holland, attended with his staff, as did the sewer, Mr. Blackburne; the daily waiters, Mr. Clough, Mr. Selby, Mr. Scudamore; and many gentlemen's sons, with estates from two to seven hundred pounds a year, who were bred up in the castle; my lady's gentlemen of the chamber, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Fox.

At the first table sat the noble family, and such of the nobility as came there.

At the second table, in the dining-room, sat knights and honourable gentlemen, attended by footmen.

In

In the hall, at the first table, sat Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward; the comptroller, Mr. Holland; the secretary; the master of the horse, Mr. Dolowar; the master of the fishponds, Mr. Andrews; my Lord Herbert's preceptor, Mr. Adams; with such gentlemen as came there under the degree of a knight, attended by footmen, and plentifully served with wine.

At the second table in the hall (served from my Lord's table, and with other hot meats) sat the sewer, with the gentlemen waiters and pages, to the number of twenty-four.

At the third table, in the hall, sat the clerk of the kitchen, with the yeomen officers of the house, two grooms of the chamber, &c.

Other officers of the household were, chief auditor, Mr. Smith;
clerk

clerk of the accounts, George Whit-horn ; purveyor of the castle, Mr. Salisbury ; ushers of the hall, Mr. Moyle and Mr. Cooke ; closet-keeper ; gentleman of the chapel, Mr. Davies ; keeper of the records ; master of the wardrobe ; master of the armoury ; master grooms of the stable for the war-horses, twelve ; master of the hounds ; master Falconer ; porter, and his man.

Two butchers ; two keepers of the home park ; two keepers of the red deer park.

Footmen, grooms, and other menial servants, to the number of 150. Some of the footmen were brewers and bakers.

Out Officers.

Steward of Ragland, William Jones, Esq.

The

The governor of Chepstow castle,
Sir Nicholas Kemys, Bart.

Houfekeeper of Worcester house,
in London, James Redman, Esq.

Thirteen bailiffs.

Two counfel for the bailiffs to
have recourfe to.

Solicitor, Mr. John Smith.

This once magnificent caſtle is now in ruins, but the remains of it are well worth the obſervation of travellers. Among other curious parts now ſtanding is a flight of ſteps, which appear ready to fall, yet ſo curiouſly put together as to be aſcended without danger; part of the hall is ſtanding, and preſents to the view a beautiful picture of ancient architecture.

Monmouth is a large and handſome town, and well inhabited by

E

gentry:

gentry : the castle, which even flourished in the time of William the Conqueror, has been since famed for giving birth to our English hero, Henry the Fifth.

TOUR

TOUR

FROM

HOLYHEAD

TO

CHESTER.

E 2



T O U R

FROM

HOLYHEAD TO CHESTER.

HOLYHEAD is a small town, and seems to have nothing to boast of worthy the notice of the traveller, except the remains of some Roman walls, which are seen in the church yard. The constant influx of passengers to and from Ireland, enliven this otherwise secluded place.

Aberfraw in Anglesea was the seat of Howel Dha, or Howel the Good, prince of the united principa-

lities of Wales, about the year 940 ; his code of laws are yet existing, and evince him to have been a mild and judicious legislator.

There are no vestiges of the palace remaining ; probably, most of the buildings were then constructed of timber, which may account for the traces of many, not at this day to be discovered.

This bleak country seems to be ill cultivated and thinly inhabited.

At Gwindw, twelve miles and a half from Holyhead, is an inn, whose pre-eminence for comfort and accommodation to travellers, remains yet unrivalled. For a stranger to visit the copper works at Paris Mountain may be well worth his attention.

The Paris mine produces the greatest quantity of copper ore of any in

in the kingdom ; this vast body of mineral was discovered in 1768, after many unsuccessful trials, which had nearly exhausted the patience of the adventurers ; the major part of the ore is not of the first quality, but the vein is said to be upwards of twenty yards thick, and of unknown length.

Great quantities of very fine copper are also obtained from iron being put into the water which flows from the mine, and occasions a transmutation of the metal from iron to copper. We were informed that the ore which is found in this mine produces more brimstone than this kingdom can consume.

Few persons of common curiosity and leisure will travel through Anglesea without visiting this wonderful mineral mountain.

A little to the right of Gwindw is Plasnewyd, the elegant mansion of the Earl of Uxbridge, which is beautifully situated on the bank of the river, where the vessels sailing up and down enliven the scene.

It is built of stone in the Gothic style; there are fine woods and plantations behind and on each side of the house, in which are several curious remains of the Druids; the prospect in front is bounded by the Caernarvonshire mountains.

The productions of Anglesea are abundant.

Planting seems to have been entirely neglected in this island, except near gentlemen's houses, where you see a few trees, intended for shelter; how much might the scenery of the country be beautified, the wants of fuel and timber supplied, by a disposition in the gentlemen of
landed

landed property to plant ; and how much is it to be lamented, that this *amor patriæ* is wanting to effect so desirable a purpose.

I do not recollect whether Mr. Arthur Young, to whose indefatigable labours in the improvement of agriculture and planting we owe so much, ever made a tour here ; if he had, I think he would have been as angry with the farmers of Anglesea as he was with those of France.

Along the turnpike road to Bangor Ferry is a fine view of the British Alps, the mountains of Snowdon, whose height Mr. Pennant reckons to be, from the quay at Caernarvon to the summit, one thousand one hundred and eighty-nine yards and one foot:

About five miles to the left is Beaumaris, which is a small corporate town, with little trade ; it has a

good harbour for shipping, which frequently take shelter here. A new town-hall, with a handsome assembly room, has been built here within these few years, at the expense, we were informed, of the member for the borough.

At one end of the town is the castle, built by Edward I. where he frequently spent some months together, in order to complete the work of conquest which he had begun; it is now inclosed in the pleasure grounds of Baron Hill, the seat of Lord Bulkeley, which adds a grand object to his prospect, and at the same time preserves this magnificent ruin from the dilapidations of mischievous persons.

The castle is a noble structure, encircled with a strong wall, and circular towers at regular distances. The magnificent hall, and beautiful

little chapel, with the adjoining oratories, merit the notice of travellers ; it stands at the edge of the marsh, and commands an extensive prospect.

Baron Hill, the seat of festive hospitality, stands upon a beautiful eminence, commanding a view of the town and castle of Beaumaris ; all the ships that pass between Ireland and Liverpool ; an extensive prospect over the sands of the mountains, from the mouth of the river Conway to Snowdon ; also the turnpike road from Penmaenmawr to the slate-works at Llandegai. The grounds owe their beautiful arrangement to the taste of Mr. Emes ; and I think, for grandeur of situation, and variety of prospect, Baron Hill stands at present unrivalled in North Wales.

Bangor Ferry-house is twelve miles and a half from Gwindw, where every degree of comfort and good

accommodation is rendered to the traveller.

An undertaking to build a bridge across the Menai, near this place; was conceived a few years ago; and Mr. John Golborne, whose integrity and abilities as an engineer were eminent, was here for some time, and reported his opinion of the practicability of the scheme, and the expense. Very great objections were made on the part of the Caernarvon people to the work, urging, that it would obstruct or destroy the navigation of the river to Caernarvon.

It is the opinion of many intelligent persons that their objections might very easily have been removed, and this desirable object accomplished, if Golborne had lived. The pointed rocks and little isles, that at low water appear almost in a line

line across the river, seem strongly to justify the idea of its practicability.

The most agreeable time to cross the stream is at low water; the ferry is a safe one, but frequently rough and unpleasant, particularly when the wind sets in easterly.

Bangor is a small market town, of mean appearance, though very much improved. It is an episcopal see, and boasts of great antiquity.

The present cathedral is Gothic, and appears to have been built in the time of Henry the Seventh. It has received some great improvements and repairs by Dr. Warren, Bishop of the diocese, who, with great taste and at a considerable expense, has modernized the old palace, where his Lordship with a distinguished hospitality entertains the neighbouring gentry and clergy, and receives the blessings of a numerous poor, during a resi-

a residence of one half of the year, shewing a laudable example to other diocesans.

The remains of several Welch princes, as also of bishops and deans, lie interred here.

Here is an extensive prospect eastward, of Beaumaris, the Ormes-heads, and Penmaen-mawr. Codfish, salmon, lobsters, oysters, and other fish, are in great plenty along the Welch coast; the beef, mutton, and lamb, small and sweet; but the greatest part of the veal is very ordinary.

At no great distance from Bangor is Llandegai, where the church makes a conspicuous figure, and contains the remains of Archbishop John Williams, a native of Conway, who, at the commencement of the civil wars, was a zealous royalist, and afterwards, on a supposed injury, assisted

assisted the parliamentary forces to subdue the castle of Conway.

A little below the church is a village called Aber Cegid, by the side of a small rivulet, which here passes into the sea.

I was informed that near a thousand persons at this time find employment here, and that the sale of *slates* amounts to twenty thousand pounds yearly.

The quarries, from which these immense quantities of *slates* are taken, lie at a few miles distance, and belong to Lord Penrhyn, to whose liberal spirit for improvement, and acquaintance with the advantages of an active life, this country owes very great obligations.

Upon the left hand stands Penrhyn, the elegant mansion of the noble possessor; the situation is elevated and pleasant, commanding a view of Anglesea,

Anglesea and the Irish sea, and bounded on the other side by the Snowdon hills.

On the site of this house stood formerly a castle, or palace, the residence of Roderic Molwynog, a Welch prince, who reigned about the year 720. A large wood formerly inclosed the house, which the improved taste of modern times has in some degree removed; but the very extensive plantations, which his Lordship makes every year, will in a short time change the otherwise bleak aspect of the country.

The castellated form of the house, with its elegant turrets, meeting the eye above the trees, exhibit a charming object to the traveller. It has the appearance of being built of stone; but the front is faced with tiles, brought from Southampton, which, upon a nearer approach, seem to be
jointed

joined like bricks ; the inside doors are of mahogany, brought from his Lordship's estates in Jamaica. The *ancient drinking-horn* is in the possession of this family.

At a short distance I was struck with the appearance of a house on the left hand, built in a stile of great neatness, on a spot which I well recollect to have been covered with fragments of rock and stones, interspersed with rushes and roots of alder trees, and whose rugged appearance seemed to have been continued from the deluge ; but now, *by the prophetic eye of taste*, assumes a new creation, and is seen with wonder and delight.

Mr. Wyatt, agent to Lord Penrhyn, has distinguished himself in the formation of this little spot.

The river, which once ran rugged and unbounded in its course, is now confined

confined within the margin of a pretty sloping lawn, and the progressive heights of the stream form beautiful cascades and salmon leaps, seen from the front of the house; the turnpike road, over the bridge, crosses the view, which is terminated by the Snowdon hills: it is called Lime Grove.

At six miles distance from hence is Aber, a village very pleasantly situated at the edge of the Lavan Sands. I was pleased with the novelty of a neat house, and exceeding good accommodations here: the public are obliged to Lord Bulkeley for this agreeable stage between Conway and Bangor.

The situation is delightful in fine weather; the grand groupe of mountains, swelling one above another, seemingly contending for pre-eminence, and covered with snow at
some

some seasons of the year, range behind the house, whilst Anglesea presents its shores in the front, beautifully embellished with gentlemen's seats, and the town and castle of Beaumaris.

Here formerly stood a castle or palace, which commanded this pass into the mountains, and belonged to Llewellyn the Great, prince of North Wales, who married the princess of England, and died in 1240; his coffin is now in the Gwydier chapel at Llanrwt.

This is a good sporting country; grouse, sea-fowl, and woodcocks are here in great abundance.

I rode to see a cascade in the neighbourhood, called Rhyadr fawr, or the great waterfall, which, though not large when I saw it, I was informed in the rainy seasons it increased to a magnificent cataract.

The

The sands opposite the inn, which you cross at low water to Beaumaris, supply the poor people here with inexhaustible quantities of cockles and muscles.

The ride from Aber, over Penmaenmawr, and up the hill called Sychnant, to Conway, affords as great variety of prospect and grandeur of scenery as most in the kingdom.

I was agreeably surprised to find a dangerous steep precipice had given place to a fine turnpike road, rising in a gentle ascent over the once dreadful hill of Penmaen.

The public house, formerly kept here by Mrs. Evans, who entertained travellers with a comfortable though plain accommodation, is now unfrequented.

The height of this mountain is about five hundred yards; the present
road.

road is cut on the side of the hill, about one hundred yards above the sea, from the edge of which a vast wall is built upon arches to the road, to support it at a part where there was a defect in the rock. Above the road the mountain rises with tremendous majesty, craggy, bleak, and barren.

The appearance of the rocks projecting over the road, seem to menace the traveller with instant destruction; and the loose stones, which in the rainy and snowy seasons roll down the hill into the sea, were sufficient reasons for spurring my horse to reach the bottom.

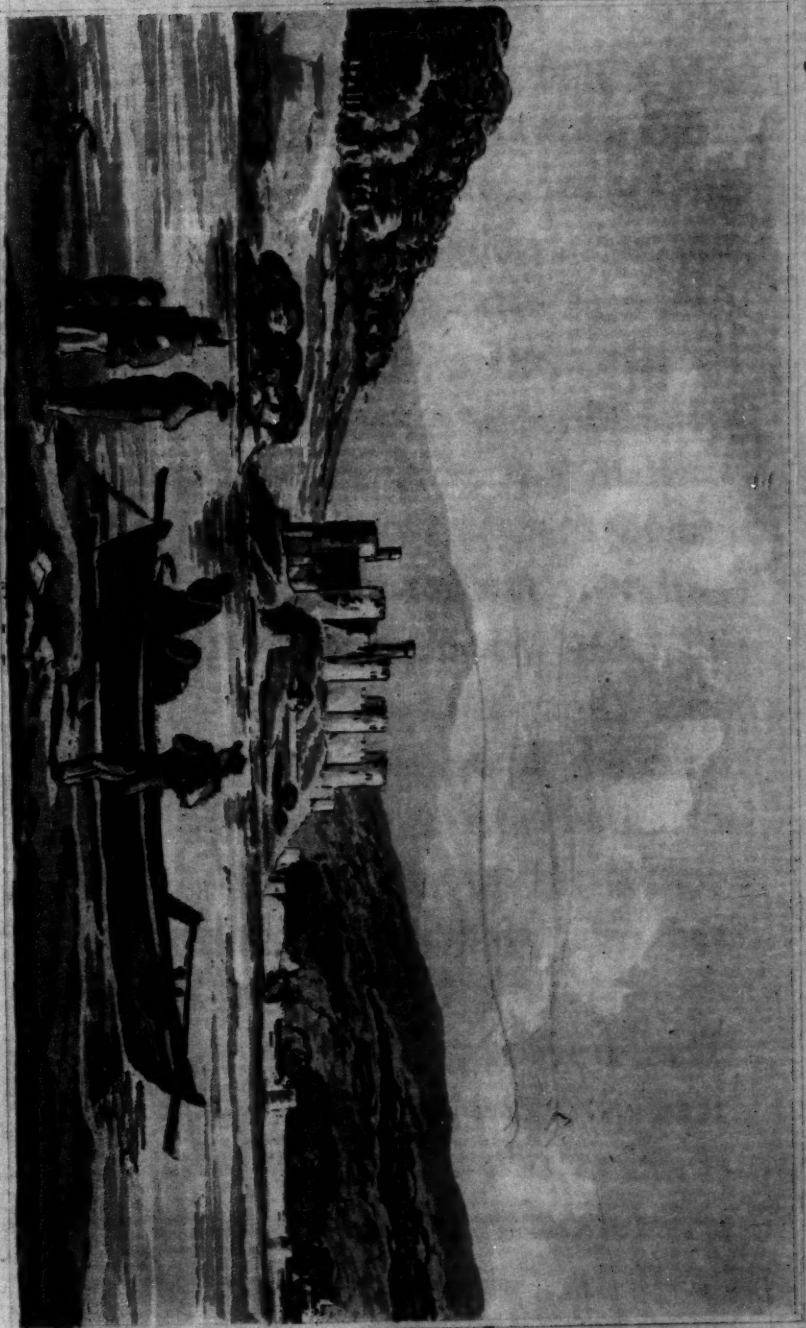
Before this safe commodious turnpike road was made, to which the kingdom of Ireland contributed liberally, travellers were obliged to wait till the tide went out, that they might cross the sands under Penmaenbach;

or

or otherwise to ride some miles over a bank of loose gravel, formed by the tide, and ascend Sychnant, then a steep rugged precipice, to go to Conway, where I arrived in the evening, after a ride of sixteen miles from Bangor.

The view of Conway strikes the traveller with ideas of its grandeur and magnificence. It stands upon a declivity at the mouth of the river Conway. The town, which cannot boast of much elegance in buildings, is encircled by a strong wall, with twenty-four semi-circular towers at regular distances; on the south side stands the castle, built by King Edward the First about the year 1284. *See Plate.*

This castle is built in a stile different from Caernarvon, though probably by the same masterly architect; all the towers are round, and
from



Conway Castle.

J. Hyslop. Sc.

2 JY 58

from the eight principal ones rise elegant turrets, adding considerable beauty to the whole; in one of these towers is an arched window, in the form of a recess, supported by very neat pillars. Mr. Pennant, to whose ingenious labours we owe a just and entertaining account of his native country, says, "This in ancient
" times was an elegant part of archi-
" tecture, called the *oriel*, usual in
" the houses of people of rank, and
" appears, from a poem of the very
" age in which this was built, to
" have been the toilet of the ladies,
" and probably might have been that
" of Queen Eleanor."

Within the castle is a great hall, 130 feet long and 32 broad, the roof very lofty, supported by eight beautiful arches, where the conquering Edward held his levies, and issued forth mandates to his new subjects.

A revolt

A revolt once happening here, Edward hastened to this strong fortress, already surrounded on the land side by multitudes from the mountains, who had intercepted his provisions and carriages; and, by a sudden rise of the water in the river, his troops were prevented from following or affording him assistance, which rendered his situation here for some time very alarming; the garrison being in such want of provisions as to oblige the King to partake of very coarse victuals equally with the common soldier; he was released from these difficulties by the water suddenly subsiding, and the hasty retreat of the Welch into the mountains. The King afterwards passed his Christmas holidays here festively, without molestation.

Though from the grand appearance of these spacious apartments,
large

large kitchens, cellars, and ovens, we may be induced to suppose that the possessors of them lived in great luxury and splendor; yet I am inclined to think that there are very few even of the *middle rank* of people in these days that do not lie down on more comfortable beds, eat their victuals better dressed, drink greater variety of liquors, wear better linen, and, in short, are better accommodated than the nobility were in the time of King Edward the First; for we read of orders being then given, that *clean straw* should be put into the King's bed chamber every week.

The best view of this superb structure is from the pleasure ground of Owen Holland, Esq. a gentleman whose inclination and power of doing good uniting, render him a valuable resident in this his native country.

The mode of travelling through Wales has been entirely changed within thirty years. Travellers going between Chester and Holyhead were then obliged to take a guide to conduct them safely over the almost trackless heaths and mountains in Flintshire and Denbighshire. The publicans now living, who remember those times, complain that passengers now fly through the country, scarcely allowing themselves time to refresh ; whereas formerly they were used to drag heavily along the roads, continuing two or three nights on their journey.

The view at the bottom of the town of Conway, across the river of Marl, Bodfcallen, and Dyganwy castle, bursts upon the sight of the traveller, through the arched gateway, in an uncommon manner.

The

The castle of Diganwy, of which some small parts yet remain, stands upon a rock highly elevated above the river, and boasts of being the residence of the princes in North Wales, before it was destroyed by lightning, about the year 816 : it was rebuilt, and considered as a strong post, about 876 ; we find it again restored to consequence by the Earl of Chester in 1098 ; it was again destroyed by Llewellyn ap Jorwerth, and rebuilt by the Earl of Chester in 1209. King John made a disgraceful retreat with his army from this place in 1210.

This pusillanimous Prince is said to have drawn down the indignation of the clergy, which involved him in a dishonourable humiliation, by a fall of wit which he threw on the usual corpulence of priests ; *how plump and well fed is this animal,*

exclaimed he, one day when he caught a very fat stag, *and yet I dare swear he never heard mass!*

Upon the adjacent eminence stand Marl and Bodscallan; the former was destroyed by fire some years ago, the latter is one of the seats of Sir Roger Mostyn, the respected Knight of the shire of Flint. The situation is fine, amidst surrounding woods, and commands a beautiful view. Gloddaeth is another seat of the Mostyns, situated on a rock embellished with plantations and walks, commanding a variety of extensive prospect.

Much, very much remains yet to be done by the owner of these large possessions, to satisfy the admirers of planting and agriculture, though the country here presents a less denuded appearance than the parts which we have travelled through.

The

The road from Conway Ferry to Abergele, ten miles, is in many places straight, rough, and incommodious; but the once disagreeable and dangerous precipice of Penmaen Rhos, no longer terrifiest the traveller; the road is diverted from the defenceless steep side to the back part of the hill.

Not far from this place the ill-fated Richard the Second was treacherously betrayed into the hands of his enemy Bolingbroke, and carried prisoner to the castle of Flint. There are antique drawings of the unfortunate monarch's captivity at Conway, and of his interview with the usurper at Flint castle, in the curious collection of Strutt's Regal Antiquities.

As you pass by Gwrch, whose bleak situation calls aloud for plantations to shelter it from the winter's blasts, on the right hand is a

mountain of lime rock, which promises to be inexhaustible; vast quantities are shipped in vessels to Liverpool and other places, and from its proximity to the turnpike road, furnishes it with materials for improvement; but it must be allowed, that notwithstanding these roads have received considerable repairs, yet they have not kept an equal pace in improvement with those in Caernarvonshire; they are in many parts circuitous, and incommodiously narrow.

The land here produces good grain, the valuable manure lime being close at hand. Abergele, a small town on the edge of Rhuddlan Marsh, was my next stage.

I was agreeably surprised to find that our road to Chester was not, as formerly, over this marsh, which was

at

at all times rugged, wet, and dangerous, and oftentimes impassable.

The castle of Rhuddlan stands a conspicuous object on the left, at the mouth of the river Clwyd. It is built of red stone; the present ruins consist of a square area, surrounded by a strong wall, having a stately round tower at each angle, encircled with a ditch, faced on each side with masonry, and was probably built by King Edward the First, who held a parliament here; the parliament-house still remains. Randle, Earl of Chester, being besieged in this castle by the Welch, was relieved by a large body of rabble collected at Chester, and commanded by Roger Lacey, for which service his heirs, and all persons licensed by them, are exempted from the penalties of the vagrant act.

From Abergele you ascend the hill to the pleasant village of St. George, from whence is a very pretty prospect.

Kinmeal-house was lately purchased by Mr. Hughes, one of the owners of the copper mine at Paris mountain, who is now building an elegant mansion near to this pleasant site. Sir Edward Lloyd has built a handsome house, which is seen below Kinmael. A short ride from hence brings you to St. Asaph, a small town, and a bishop's see. It is built on a steep side of a hill, and claims the antiquity of having the see founded by Bishop Kentigern, about 544, who nominated Asaph for his successor, who died in 596, and was buried here.

I was tempted, a few miles before I reached Holywell, to deviate from the direct road, and visit Downing,
the

the residence of Mr. Pennant, to whose researches into natural history and entertaining travels the public are not more obliged than an extensive acquaintance, and numerous poor, are by his hospitality and beneficence.

Downing is situated in a small vale, is built of stone, and has a very neat appearance; the grounds are laid out with great taste, are embellished with stately old oaks, and afford many fine views; a handsome spacious room contains a most valuable library, and a large collection of beautiful drawings.

I was surprised to find the bye roads here narrow, and in very bad repair, particularly as they lead to gentlemen's houses. I saw some large woods, which gave ornament and shelter to Mostyn hall, the ancient seat of the Mostyns.

Holywell, ten miles from St. Asaph, is the most considerable market town in North Wales, and the most populous. The famous Well of *Saint Winifrede* springs from the side of the hill, and throws up *twenty-one tons of water in a minute.*

It is inclosed by a neat arched building, with a chapel above, supported by pillars. A drawing of it was lately taken, and engraved by Mr. John Ingleby. This was, in the times of Romish superstition, the resort of royal and noble pilgrims; nor has it yet lost its healing powers, in the opinion of many people.

The writer of this well remembers, when a school boy, wantonly teasing a poor man, who had in his youth, by a severe cold, lost the use of his *limbs*, and had two *crutches*. The expense of his maintenance many years on the parish, at last induced

the Overseers to send him to Holywell, to try the effects of that surprising *Well*; and, singular to tell, before two months had elapsed, he returned, leaving one crutch behind. The next season he renewed his visit, and came home with a stick, leaving his other crutch; since which period he has provided for himself, without the alms of the parish.

The legend of St. Winifrede's head being cut off by the Welch Prince, Cradocus, and miraculously re-united by the prayers of St. Beuno, forms a volume in the life of that saint, written by Bishop Fleetwood.

The spring of water, which, it is said, instantly flowed from the spot where the head rolled down to, is perhaps the greatest in the kingdom; at this time the benefits which trade and manufacturers receive from it are great indeed.

There are three large buildings erected on its stream, belonging to the cotton twist company, a business which is here carried on to a degree of extent and perfection exceeding any other in the kingdom.

Here industry invites men, women, and children, in vast numbers, to partake of her benefits, and of course the enjoyment of the comforts and conveniences of life.

The great copper works belonging to the Paris mine company are also worked by this powerful stream. The copper is brought here, and being melted into ingots or pigs, then passes between large iron rollers, or under great hammers, which reduce it to a thickness suitable to the different purposes of sheathing ships, making pans, &c. and also for half-penny and penny pieces, great quantities of which are in circulation here,
stamped

stamped with the Druid's head, and made acceptable by the Paris mine company. There are corn and other mills worked by this stream, and the banks are likely to be covered with works partaking of its benefits down to the level of the sea.

The ruins of the ancient abbey of Basingwerk, which stands below the town, deserve a visit from the curious traveller. This was, in the reigns of Henry the Second and Edward the First, a place of great consequence, and the abbots held their seats in parliament.

From Holywell you pass through Halkin, which commands a fine view across the water of the distant Lancashire hills, Wirral, and Parkgate, Hilbree island, and the estuary of the Dee. Earl Grosvenor's valuable lead mines are on the adjoining mountain, the farm of which, I was informed,

formed, produced to his Lordship upwards of eight thousand pounds *per annum*. They were granted to Sir Richard Grosvenor by King Charles the First, in 1634. A mine belonging to his Lordship produced, in one quarter of the year 1792, fourteen hundred tons of ore, which would be worth about seven or eight pounds per ton.

There are several mines seen near the road belonging to other gentlemen. The ride along this improved country treats the traveller with variety of beautiful prospects. Northop, the next village, is mean, but the church makes a good appearance; the country is in fine tillage, and has a show of good timber.

Upon the flat below, at the mouth of the river Dee, stand Flint town; the castle appears to have been a square building, with very large

round towers at the angles; one is called the double tower; the thickness of the walls must have been proof against any attack that could have been made before the invention of gunpowder.

It has galleries round the court, and a strong *keep*, or dungeon, and was built in the time of King Henry the Second and Edward the First. The unfortunate Richard the Second surrendered himself a prisoner here to the Duke of Lancaster, by the perfidious treachery of the Earl of Northumberland, who had that morning, whilst at mass in Conway castle, taken an oath of fidelity to him. The devoted monarch was conveyed to Chester castle.

This castle, having made a gallant defence against the parliamentary forces, was obliged to surrender on August 29, 1646, to General Mytton.

It

It is nearly opposite to Shotwick castle, in Wirral, from whence it appears by the rolls in the Tower, that Edward the First issued several mandates to the abbots of Basingwerk and Conway.

These roads have received great repair, having had several substantial bridges erected, and the deep vallies levelled within these few years. There are not many rides of an equal distance that afford more variety of fine prospects; the view across the sands of the hundred of Wirral, with Neston, and the vessels and houses at Parkgate, are delightful objects on one side, whilst an improved and well-wooded country embellishes the other.

Dear scene! that stretch'd between the silver arms
Of Deva,* and of Mersey, meets the main,
And when the sun-gilt day illumines its charms,
Boasts of peculiar grace, nor boasts in vain.

Miss Seward.

* The classical name for Dee.

Hawarden,

Hawarden is five miles from Northop, where the remains of the ancient castle stand upon a hill on the right hand. This fortress, from its situation on the borders of Wales, within a few miles of Chester, frequently changed its masters, being sometimes found in the possession of the English, and at other times valiantly recovered by the Welch. In the civil wars it underwent the same vicissitudes, until the able General Mytton took it on March 17th, 1645, and it soon after suffered the fate of other castles.

The remains of this fortress are not now considerable; a large round tower appears to be preserved with care, the other parts seem to be left to decay. The infant son of the late Sir Stephen Glynne owns this castle, and large possessions in the neighbourhood. The late Sir John Glynne,
of

of respected memory, built a handsome mansion here, and with a laudable foresight, not always possessed by gentlemen of fortune, made large plantations of oak and other trees, thereby converting a barren unprofitable waste into a wood of fine timber. This country abounds in coal; several fire-engines are erected to drain the water from the pits.

TOUR

T O U R

FROM

CHEPSTOW TO SWANSEA,

ST. DAVID'S, CAERNARVON,

AND

RUTHIN.

T O U R

CHERISH MUSEUM
LONDON



RUTHIN

TOUR

FROM

CHEPSTOW to SWANSEA, &c.

CHEPSTOW leads through an agreeable neck of land, washed on each side either by the Severn or Wye.

The shores of the Wye are bold, rocky, and woody; but the capital object which catches the eye, on the approach to Chepstow, is the castle, founded on a high perpendicular cliff, rising from the river, and extended along the edge of it.

The

The whole fortress occupied several acres, and the ruins of it are still very considerable. The principal gateway has a venerable aspect, and, though of Norman origin, and the oldest part of the whole structure, is nearly perfect.

The parish church of Chepstow is part of the old priory, and the west entrance is a handsome arch of Norman architecture, ornamented with the mouldings peculiar to that people.

Tintern Abbey is situated on the banks of the Wye, a few miles above Chepstow. No monastical ruin in Great Britain presents a more beautiful perspective than the inside of the abbey church. The present remains are carefully preserved from further destruction, and the fallen ornaments of its once vaulted roof are so disposed, in moderate piles, that all their sculpture, which is remarkably sharp,
and

and well executed, may be inspected with the utmost facility.

The body of the church is in its original level; and though the pavement has long since been removed, I scarcely lamented the loss of it, as the substituted turf, clean and entirely free from weeds and briars, has perhaps a better effect.

This abbey was founded in the year 1131; but I should imagine the present church was begun several years afterwards, as it is an elegant specimen of the chaste Gothic, and constructed upon one plan and in one style.

The views from the Wye, between Chepstow and Tintern, are exceedingly magnificent: the rocks on each side seem to be from 300 to 600 feet high; they are sometimes perpendicular and wholly naked, and sometimes the very precipices are covered with

with woods, from the river's brink to their summits, for continued miles.

On the top of one of these man-
rled mountains are the well-known
gardens of Persfield, which command
a large part of this awful prospect.

At Caldecot is the shell of a castle,
which was built in the Norman age,
as the mixture of the circular and
Gothic arches sufficiently proves.

Caerwent is at present a miserable
village, and has nothing to manifest
its Roman greatness, excepting some
ruined walls on the south and west
sides.

The country is here pleasantly in-
closed, and near Caerleon the views
are extensive and fine.

This city is of great antiquity and
fame, and was strongly defended by
the Romans with brick walls. Many
remains of its ancient magnificence
are still extant; such as splendid pa-
laces,

laces, which once emulated, with their gilded roofs, the grandeur of Rome; for it was originally built by the emperors, and adorned with stately edifices; immense baths; ruins of temples; and a theatre, the walls of which are still standing. Here we still see, both within and without the walls, subterraneous buildings, aqueducts, and vaulted caverns. The city is pleasantly situated on the banks of the navigable Uske, and surrounded with woods and pasture.

Various antiquities have, in different ages, been discovered among the ruins of this city. Camden and his continuator have preserved a considerable catalogue of them; and even at this time the fund is not exhausted.

The Roman walls are still visible, but the facing stones have long since been removed for private uses. Near

G

the

the centre of a field, adjoining to the west wall, is the theatre (or more properly the amphitheatre) mentioned by Giraldus.

The form of it only remains, no traces of its walls being now discoverable: the diameter of the area is very large, and is bounded with a high circular entrenchment of earth.

There is very little extant of the castle, which is of a later age; the keep is remarkably lofty, and on climbing up the steep sides of it, I blundered upon a curious piece of Roman antiquity.

It was part of a circular stone, flat on one side, and convex on the other, 27 inches in diameter: on the flat surface is represented in bas relief a female figure sitting: one hand inclines downwards, and a small dolphin is sporting in the palm of the other, which is extended. There is a
broad

broad foliage round the edge of the stone, which, resembling a myrtle leaf, serves as a border to it.

The figure is indisputably intended for a Venus, and both the design and execution of it, when perfect, in my opinion, far surpassed the general specimens of sculpture which the Romans left in Britain.

The present Caerleon is a melancholy contrast to the ancient, and has scarcely a decent house in it.

Newport is a considerable town, and was formerly strengthened with a small castle, situated on the river's brink, the shell of which is still pretty entire.

The bridges over the Uske, both at Newport and Caerleon, and over the Wye at Chepstow, are built upon exceeding high piles of wood: they are floored with boards, which are always loose, but prevented from

slipping by small tenons at their ends: the precaution of having the boards unfixed is not unnecessary, as the tides in these rivers sometimes rise to a stupendous height, and would otherwise blow up the bridges.

The roads had hitherto been perfectly good; and though the turnpike is not continued to Caerphily, yet it is a very passable coach-road.

The whole ride is pleasant, at the foot of high hills generally cultivated to their summits; and from Machen, the river Rhymny was our guide to Bedways bridge, which carried us into Glamorganshire.

The town of Caerphily consists of a few straggling cottages, and is surrounded with mountains, ruder and less cultivated than those which we had passed.

The castle, including the out-works, is of an immense size; part
of

of the present building was constructed in the year 1221, the ancient castle having been razed in 1217.

This part, which is included within the inner moat, is a noble ruin; the hall in it is, excepting the roof, perfect, and is a grand room, being a double cube of 34 feet in breadth; the form of its Gothic windows, and of the clustered flying pillars between them, from which sprang the vaulted arch of its roof, has a noble appearance.

It is remarkable, that the east wall, on the south side of the principal entrance, is concave, between the large upright buttresses: these buttresses resemble towers, and had battlements on their tops, to protect the intermediate walls.

The vestiges of a draw-bridge appear on the west side of the original

nal castle, which connected it with a large piece of high level ground, embanked round, the walls of which embankment are still visible; and on the farther side of it are the remains of a round tower.

Spenser held this castle for King Edward the Second, and was besieged in it, by the Queen's and the Barons' forces, in the year 1327. According to Camden, Spenser defended it so manfully that his enemies were soon compelled to retire.

There is a good road from Caerphilly to the Pont y Pridd, or the new bridge, over the Taafe; but as we were to return by part of it to Daerdiff, we took a guide over the mountain of Eglwyssillan, which parish stands near the top of it. The prospects from the mountains were extensive, but they scarcely compensated

fated for the badness of its descent towards the bridge.

The Pont y Prîdd consists of one arch, from bank to bank, over the rapid Taafe, whose flooded torrent drives every thing before it that offers resistance; as two stone bridges, in this very spot, have fatally experienced.

This arch is perhaps the largest in the whole world.

It is a segment of a circle; the chord of it is 140 feet, and the height of the key stone, from the spring of the arch, is 34 feet

About half a mile above the bridge is a natural fall of the Taafe: we saw it in a still season; but though the fall is not very deep, yet the broken rocks in the river, the craggy precipice from which it descends, and the sylvan ride towards it, form a pleasing picture.

Nothing can be more agreeable than the first six or seven miles from the Pont y Pridd towards Caerdiff. The road passes along the shady bank of the raging Taafe; the country is finely diversified with the inequality of the mountains on each side of the torrent; two of them, finely clothed with wood, seem almost to close together; between which, under the small ruins of Castle Coch, we passed into the vale of Glamorgan.

Caerdiff is a populous but ill-built town, nor is there any thing very pleasing in its environs; its situation is on a low flat, near the mouth of the Taafe.

The old walls of Caerdiff are very extensive, and the ruins of them are still considerable. They were probably built, as well as the large octagon tower, on the keep of the castle, by the first Norman invaders.

The

The most remarkable occurrence in the history of Caerdiff castle is, that Robert, eldest son of William the Conqueror, and the right heir of his father to both England and Normandy, was, after undergoing various vicissitudes of fortune, at length confined in it by King Henry the First; and here he languished, deprived of his sight, for the term of twenty-six years, when death released him from the unnatural cruelties of his brother.

Llandaff stands on a gentle elevation, but is in reality a paltry village, though a bishopric.

The remains of the old cathedral are very beautiful; the door-cases are all of Norman work, and well executed; the rest of it is an elegant Gothic, though it was constructed so early as the year 1120, and is perhaps

one of the oldest specimens of Gothic in the whole island.

The modern cathedral, on which large sums have lately been lavished, is a medley of absurdities : part of the ancient nave is included in it, but the rebuilder has added Roman architecture, mixed with a capricious kind of his own, to the solemnity of the Norman and Gothic.

The ruins of several castles appear in the neighbourhood of Cowbridge ; and I am sorry I did not make an excursion to St. Donat's, which, I have since been informed, deserved attention.

Cowbridge consists of one broad handsome street.

Journeying towards Pile, we left Wenny castle on our right hand, and Ogmores on our left, both within view of the turnpike.

From

From our cleanly little inn at Pile, we made a walking excursion in search of the remains of Cynfeg castle, which are more than two miles distant from it.

Scarcely a wall of this castle is now to be seen, and the face of the country must have suffered great revolutions from the winds and inundations, since Fizhamon, the first Norman invader, chose to fix his residence on this spot.

This fortress was built on one single mount, about the size of a common keep, and there do not appear any vestiges of other fortifications near it. It is now surrounded with naked sands, blown up in irregular heaps, and subject to alterations by every storm. The present situation gives no idea of its having been proper either for pleasure or defence.

Near Margam, in a lane leading from thence towards Cynfeg, we saw one of the stones noticed by Camden ; it is now placed upright, and the characters of the sepulchre are still perfectly legible.

The situation of Margam abbey, founded by William Earl of Gloucester, grandson to Fitzhamon, is at the foot of a high mountain, wholly covered with wood. I omitted to see the orange trees in the garden grove, which, I have since heard, are the finest in all Britain.

In the street of Margam is an ancient cross, which, with its pedestal, is covered with a profusion of sculpture representing knots and fret-work. A few characters are seen near the two figures on it, but I was not able to decypher them.

The

The abbey church is a Norman edifice, in the best taste.

The road is now continued under the mountains, near the Severn shore, and passes close to some large copper-works to Aberavon, where it crosses a stone bridge of one arch to Briton Ferry, which, crossing, we rode along the beach for a few miles, and were ferried over the Tavey into Swansea.

The landscape about Briton Ferry is exceedingly rich: the mountains, the river, and its woody banks, form a beautiful back-ground and contrast to the bold and craggy shore, and the broken insulated knolls near it.

Just above the ferry is the seat of Mr. Vernon, situated in the centre of this enchanting view.

The sea breezes from the Bristol channel have no influence over the
verdure

verdure of the trees on this southern coast, which flourish as well here as in the more inland parts.

Swansea makes a handsome appearance from the approach to it, being built near the mouth of the Tavey, on a semicircular rising bank above it. The town is populous, and the streets are wide; it carries on a considerable trade in coals, pottery, and copper.

Such is the profusion of coal and limestone in Glamorganshire, that lime is the general manure of the whole country.

The remaining walls of Swansea castle are finished with an open Gothic parapet, through the arches of which the water ran from the tiles.

Leaving Swansea, we crossed over the tedious and dreary mountain of Bettūs, in the midway towards the
Llandilo

Llandīlo vawr (from the extremities of which there is a rich and extensive prospect) and descended into Caermarthenshire.

Llandīlo vawr is a small town, hanging on the declivity of a hill washed by the Towy.

According to the history of Wales, by Carādoc of Lhancarvan, the last decisive battle between the armies of Edward the First and Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, was fought near this town, when the King's forces gained a complete victory; in consequence of which, the unfortunate Prince, soon after, near Builth, lost both his power and life.

This victory put a final period to the Welch independency, in the year 1282, since which time the principality has continued subject to the crown of England.

The

The ruins of Dinevawr castle stand on the high prominence of a beautiful semicircular hill, entirely manted with wood, and which, with a regular sweep, precipitately descends to the Towy.

The castle, which Giraldus saw, was razed to the ground in the year 1194, six years after his itinerary; but it was soon rebuilt.

From the extent of the present ruins, I cannot conceive it to have been so much a castle of strength and grandeur as a small palace calculated for the more refined and social pleasures.

The ruins are now inclosed in the beautiful park of Newton, belonging to Mr. Rice, and adjoining the town of Llandilo.

The castle of Caraig-cennin stands four miles S. E. from Llandilo, towards the black mountain: it is most strongly

strongly situated, on the point of a lofty craggy, insulated rock, three sides of which are wholly inaccessible: it is surrounded at moderate but unequal distances with mountains, and the roads leading to it are, even now, but barely practicable. The fortress, of which there are great remains, does not occupy an acre of ground; for, indeed, the rock would not admit of more.

This was doubtless a British building; the remaining ruins confirm the supposition, as there is not the least appearance of Gothic about them.

The well in this castle is a singular curiosity.

I am aware that there is no mention made of this castle in the history of Caradoc of Lhancarvan till the year 1248, when Rhys Fychan won it from the English, to whom his mother

mother had some time before privately delivered it.

We now continued our route through a charming country, perfectly cultivated on each side of the turnpike.

We had a view on our left hand of the ruins of Durflon castle, situated on a large natural knoll, near the Towy; and soon after passed through Abergwilly, where is a feat of the Bishop of St. David's, but which has nothing to recommend it, except the beauty of the neighbouring country.

Caermarthen is a large and handsome Welch town: I speak by comparison; for, in general, the Welch streets are narrow and winding, and the decent houses are too often intermixed with the meanest cottages.

Part of the castle is now used as the county gaol; but there is nothing remarkable in the ruins of it.

According

According to Giraldus, the walls of Caermarthen were raised with brick, but I could not discover the smallest traces in the remains of them; though the redness of the stones at first deceived me, and inclined me to be of his opinion.

A long stone bridge crosses the Towy from this town; but, like the common fashion of the country, it is inconveniently narrow.

The beauty of the country now diminishes, and there is little worth attention in the road, till we arrive at Narbeth, a small town, with some remains of a castle, in Pembroke-shire. We had, indeed, a distant view, on our right hand, of the remarkable mountain called the Ragged Rocks, the summit of which appeared circular, and like the stupendous ruins of a castle wall.

About

About two miles forward we crossed the Cleddy, near which, on the right hand, appear the remains of Lauhaden castle, and on the left the fine woods of Slebach.

It is peculiar to Picton castle that it has always been inhabited. The present possessors are the Philips's, by whom it has been modernized. It is esteemed one of the capital houses in the principality; but the strongest curiosity to examine modern architecture will cause little interruption to a tour through Wales.

Haverfordwest is a large irregular town, built on the declivity of a hill, which is so steep towards the river, that the back windows of the ground floors in one street frequently overlook the roofs of another.

The castle ruins are considerable, and present a grand object to the approach from Narbeth.

As

As we were soon to traverse a poor and miserable country, we thought it prudent to exchange a bank note at Haverfordwest, to prevent the difficulties which might otherwise attend our passing it.

We made an excursion from Haverfordwest to Harbarston Haikin, situated on the broadest part of Milford Haven.

The little harbour of Harbarston is generally full of vessels, which export from it corn, coals, and limestone; and we found no difficulty in hiring a convenient boat to carry us to Pembroke.

We sailed across the haven of Milford, so well known for its magnitude and security. It appears like an immense lake; for the mouth not being at any distance visible, the whole haven seems land-locked: the mouth opens to the southward,
and

and the haven extends itself eastward.

There is nothing bold or picturesque on the shores of it; they are neither mountainous nor woody: the land round the haven consists of small inequalities of ground, pretty well cultivated, though sometimes varied with large furze brakes.

The view of Pembroke and its castle, from the river, is very grand. The town is situated upon the ridge of a long and narrow rock, gradually ascending to the highest point, on which stands the castle, at the edge of the precipice. If I may compare small things with great, it resembles much the situation of Edinburgh.

The castle is a Norman structure, mixed with the early Gothic: the principal tower, which is uncommonly

monly high and perfect, has even its stone vaulted roof remaining.

This fortress was built by Girald, constable of Windfor, ancestor of Cambrensis.

I neglected to see Carew castle and Tenby, in this neighbourhood, which, from descriptions I have since heard of them, I greatly regret.

We returned with the tide to Harbarston, and by the same road to our quarters at Haverfordwest, through an inclosed but unpleasant country, near the little parish of Haroldston, which may possibly have taken its name from King Harold.

From Haverfordwest the road leads through a miserable country, leaving a ruined tower of Roche castle on the right hand, and winds down to the beach of Niwegal, about the midway towards St. David's: it then traverses a mountain, and descends to
the

the romantic little harbour of Solvath, which is a cove, furrounded with high and barren rocks.

A street of wretched cottages, one of which is the inn, composes the city of St. David's. I had so little notion of its being the bishopric, that I inquired in the street how far it was to St. David's. The reader will easily give me credit, when he hears that the palace and cathedral stand below the town, and cannot be seen from it.

The bishop's palace, which was founded in the reign of Edward the Third, is now an immense ruin; several of the apartments are uncommonly large, the walls of which are still entire.

Edmund, Earl of Richmond, father of Henry the Seventh, lies under a raised tomb near the middle of the choir, and at a little distance
from

from it is the monument of Owen Tudor.

There is something simple and pleasing in the idea of strewing flowers and evergreens over the grave of a departed friend, which is the universal custom in these parts.

The western coast of Wales is mountainous, with steep or perpendicular cliffs towards the Irish sea. In crossing the few rivers in this dreary part of our route, we had a sharp descent from one mountain, and a quick ascent to another. The road is commonly within view of the sea, and sometimes of the Irish coast.

Few inclosures are to be seen in the neighbourhood of St. David's.

I made a short excursion from thence to see *y maen sigl*, or the shaking stone, mentioned by Gibson: it lies near the most westerly point of St David's head. Its shaking was

H

cer-

certainly a *lufus naturæ*, as it is a fragment fallen from the upper rock.

This stone has long since been immoveable, but never could be so curious as the famous rocking stone at Stonehenge in Wiltshire.

The weight of the two stones in question appeared to me to be nearly equal.

Fisgard stands upon the point of a mountain, from which there is a steep descent (cut from the precipice) to its little harbour, at the mouth of the Gwyne.

Within two miles of Newport, a poor town, situated under the ruins of a small castle, the road passes, close to the remains of four or five Druid sepulchres or altars; the stones are large, and were originally supported with four upright pillars, like the legs of a table: they are all within the circumference of about sixty yards,

yards, and one of them is nearly perfect.

These monuments lie on the left hand of the road in an enclosed field, which, in English pronunciation, is called Daertinman.

The old cross, mentioned by Gibson, remains in the church yard at Nevern; but we could not find either the inscribed stone, on the north side of the church yard, or the inscription in the church; nor could we learn any intelligence of them.

The church at Nevern has no pavement in it; and the frequent burials, in the manner of St. David's, have raised the ground within, seven or eight feet higher than it is without.

This parish is pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Nevern, and backed by some fine shady hills: we ascended one of them, and, by a bad

and intricate road, arrived at Cardigan, having passed through the dirty village of St. Dogmael, formerly famous for its abbey, some ruins of which still remain, and which the river Tyvy divides from Cardiganshire.

Most of the ancient monuments in these parts have lately been destroyed and converted to private uses.

Cardigan stands upon a gentle eminence, rising from the Tyvy, over which there is a handsome stone bridge. Part of the outward walls of the castle is still remaining, but the materials within have long since been removed.

We rode from hence to Llangoidmore, and, sending our horses from thence round to Llechryd bridge, followed a beautiful shady path cut from the precipice of the Tyvy bank for two miles. This river runs in a

broad and tranflucid ftream between the floping hills, which are about two hundred feet in height, and wholly covered with wood, from the water's brink to their fummits. This fylvan fcene is only once interrupted by a lofty, naked, and projecting rock, on which ftand the romantic ruins of Cilgarran caftle, and which, by its fingular contrast to the reft of the view, gives a finifhing to a delicious landscape.

We met our horfes at Llechryd bridge, a little below which are fome large and expenfive works, lately erected by a company for the purpofe of making tin plates.

From thefe works the beauty of the river diminifhes; but we were informed, that, at fome diftance upwards, the Tyvy is ftill more picturesque.

The town of Llanarch consists of a few straggling cottages, but the name served us as a guide to Aberystwith: for we soon found it necessary to be previously acquainted with every place in our route, as we could seldom get any farther intelligence from the few people we met on the road than to the next town or village. But, indeed, the intricacies of this ride were frequently relieved by proper direction posts.

We now left a deep and shady dale on the left hand, and soon after descended to Aberayron.

From hence the shore becoming more level and agreeable, the road quickly passes by the intrenchment of a small castle, half of which has long since been washed away by the sea.

About two hundred yards on the left hand of the road, and two miles beyond Llanrusted, are two supposed

posed Druidical sepulchral monuments; they are upright single stones, and one of them, when perfect, measured eleven feet in height above the ground, and five feet six inches in breadth.

Aberystwyth is situated on an easy elevation, in the midst of a broad vale, at the mouth of the river Ystwyth. All the towns beginning with Aber, denote their being near the mouth of a river; for Aber, in Welch, is a smaller stream, discharging itself into a greater, or into the sea.

Part of the old wall of the town is remaining, but all the facing stones have been taken away. The castle has undergone the same fate, and the ruins of it are now trifling, except one, a Gothic tower, the shell of which remains for a sea mark.

We learn from Powell the historian, that the present castle was founded by King Edward the First, in 1277, a few years before his complete conquest of Wales.

From Tal y bont, our late long *tædium* began to find some relief from a cheerful sylvan scene, which conducted us by the sides of two waterfalls, near Gwellyn-gwin bridge, to the banks of the Dovy.

The prospect before us is now enchanting; while the striking contrast of the present object, to the melancholy waste we have lately left, makes us more sensible of the pleasing transition.

The navigable Dovy runs through a broad expanse of rich meadows, encircled with a majestic chain of superb mountains, the slopes of which are beautifully chequered with corn-fields, pastures, and large woods.

Machynlleth

Machynlleth lies in a small verdant plain, surrounded with mountains. It stands in the extreme west angle of Montgomeryshire, and the bridge from the town carried us into Merioneth.

Leaving Machynlleth, we soon found ourselves in a truly alpine valley; the rapid torrent, roaring over a bed of broken rocks, and now and then interrupted by immense fragments, from which it fell in considerable cataracts; the woody and exalted precipices on each side of the river, and the mountain brooks continually rattling about us; formed a miniature picture of the romantic road between Aigues belles and Mount Cenis. Towards the extremity of this beautiful scene, the huge mountain of Cader Idris presented its naked, craggy, and prominent cliff, full to our front. I never saw an object more awfully

sublime ; it extends more than half a mile in length, and is at least a thousand feet high.

The road passes under part of this gloomy and tremendous precipice, on the right hand, within sight of a large lake on the left, and close to the brink of a smaller. It then crosses an arm of Cader Idris, and with a quick descent of two rocky miles ends at Dolgelly. Part of this latter path leads through a thin oak wood, which hangs over an impetuous torrent, foaming down a rugged declivity as steep as the road.

The town of Dolgelly is finely situated upon the Avon's bank: the vallies around are richly interspersed with woods and decent houses, while the mountains bound every prospect from the town at irregular distances.

There

There appears some spirit in the flannel trade in this neighbourhood, which extends its busy influence for many miles round the country.

We now passed near the poor remains of Vennar Abbey, or Kinner, according to Speed, and crossing the river Mothvaye, soon traversed another alpine vale.

About five miles from Dolgelly (a few large Scotch firs on each side of the road marking the spot) we turned upwards on our left to see a waterfall behind a small house of a widow Vaughan. This cataract is broken into two broad parts; the upper descends about thirty-five feet upon a small craggy ridge, and the lower about twenty feet, into a romantic basin, encircled with perpendicular or impending rocks: a fine wood surrounds it, and some of the largest trees project their shady

branches over the precipice of the cascade.

Returning to the high road, we soon crossed a bridge, under which the torrent rattled from the above cascade down a deep declivity, and through large disjointed fragments towards the river.

We quitted the valley two miles farther, and ascended a barren and dismal mountain: the road continued lonesome and melancholy for several miles, but at length conducted us to a comfortable little inn at Tan y Bwlch.

These remarkable cataracts are each of them the fall of a whole river, and situated within a quarter of a mile of one another.

In an excursion from Tan y Bwlch towards Harlech, we deviated a little from the road, to see the Rhaidr

du, or black cataract, so called from the colour of its water.

This is a fall of the rivulet Velenryd, about forty feet in depth : a regular bason, semicircled with rock, and surrounded with a thin grove, receives it. The rest of the valley is poor and uninclosed.

As we approached Harlech, the road became scarcely practicable ; it was literally a stair-case path, worn on the side of a steep precipice of a craggy and disjointed mountain.

We had as yet seen no castle so perfect as this at Harlech ; the shell is entire. I have no doubt but that the present fortress was erected by Edward the First. It is situated on a very high rock projecting in the Irish sea.

In order to avoid the goat track of our morning ride, we returned over the sands of the Traeth Bychan,

chan, which are passable only at low water.

It is remarkable that we had hitherto never deviated from the true line of our route, when alone, and that we seldom failed of doing it when we employed a guide.

Our present Ciceroni from Tan y Bwlch conducted us wrong both to and from Harlech; and on our return we were obliged to have guide upon guide, before we ventured to cross the sands, which are by no means difficult when known, but which, from their shifting and quickness, are intricate and dangerous to strangers.

We were induced by the cleanliness of our little inn, and the attentive complacency of the landlady, to sleep three nights at Tan y Bwlch. This is a single house, in the parish of Festiniogg; and about three miles
below

below it, the river Dryryd divides the inn from the parish church of Maynturogg ; it lies in a deep and narrow valley between the mountains, which are but moderately clothed with wood, excepting near the house, where the sylvan walks, amid the craggy precipices, are extremely picturesque.

At a little distance from the inn, on a woody mountain's side, is a pleasant seat of a widow Griffith.

We now traversed a desolate and cloud-capt country ; but as it happened to be low water, we avoided some of these mournful mountains by descending on the sands of the Traeth Mawr, which carried us to the Pont Aberglaslyn, which divides Merioneth from Caernarvonshire.

This bridge is one wide stone arch, and is built over a roaring waterfall, from two perpendicular precipices.

Here

Here we paused—the grandeur of the scene before us impressed a silent admiration on our senses.— We at length moved slowly onward, contemplating the wonderful chasm. An impending craggy cliff, at least 800 feet high, projects from every part of its broken front stupendous rocks of the most capricious forms, and shadows a broad and translucent torrent, which rages like a cataract, amidst the huge ruins fallen from the mountain.

The disjointed fragments of the opposite declivity, crushing their mouldering props, seem scarcely prevented from overwhelming the narrow ridge, which forms the road upon the brink of the flood.

Leaving with regret this sublime and unparalleled pass, which continues for near a mile, we pursued our route through the miserable town
of

of Bethkelert, over a rocky desert at the foot of Snowdon, and by the edge of two lakes, one of which commands attention from its size and the scenery around it, to Llyngwennyn bridge, near which is a picturesque waterfall.

A vale begins now to open, which gradually spreads itself into the pleasant and rich country around Caernarvon.

I entirely agree with Mr. Barrington, that the plans of the Welch castles, founded by Edward the First, were borrowed from the Asiatic fortresses which that prince had seen in the Holy Land, because they are precisely similar to many which Le Brun hath copied and inserted in his valuable travels.

We crossed the Menai Ferry at Beaumaris, and a four miles ride over the sands at low water, where the
true

true path was sufficiently pointed out by posts at proper distances, carried us to the Irish turnpike at Llanāber in Caernarvonshire.

We had a glimpse, for a few minutes only, of the summit of Cader Idris, from Dolgelly.

During our abode amid those superb mountains, neither sun nor stars appeared to our sight for several days; and, wrapt up in an impenetrable mist, we were perpetually enveloped with a twilight obscurity.

But on our emerging from these romantic visions, the first view of the cheerful rays of the long absent sun gave an inexpressible refreshment to our spirits—it saluted our immediate approach to the vale of Caernarvon. We changed the climate in an instant—we breathed a freer air.

The situation of Conway is exceedingly fine: it lies on the bank of
a noble

a noble river, and in the centre of a beautiful vale, well cultivated and woody.

Here we found a considerable alteration in the manners of the people. We were now in the great Irish road; the article of eating was doubled in our bills.

The town of Conway is small, and indifferently built; it was fortified with walls which still remain, and a castle, by Edward the First.

We crossed the wide ferry at Conway, which brought us into Denbighshire, and traversed a hilly country, till we came within eight miles of St. Asaph, when we entered the fertile vale of Clwyd.

We passed over Penmaen Rofs in this morning's ride, where the declivity is steep and the road indifferent: a nearer path is cut for horses along the side of the sea cliff, in the
same

same manner as at Penmaen Mawr ; but it is so formidably narrow and unprotected, that few people dare trust themselves or their horses on it.

Rydland castle is noted in history for the famous statute enacted in it by Edward the First, in the year 1284, for the better government of his newly-acquired dominion ; and the preamble of this statute informs us of the entire subjection of Wales.

Leaving the Irish road at St. Asaph, we soon arrived at the picturesque town of Denbigh, which is built on the declivity of a lofty hill, on the highest point of which are the ruins of a strong castle of the time of Edward the First. The principal gateway is a beautiful Gothic arch, and the king's statue remains in a niche over it, in the same manner as at the castle of Caernarvon.

The

The original town stood upon this hill, and the walls of it are still visible; but at present the parish church only remains on it, near which is the unfinished shell of a larger church, with a nave and two aisles, which appears to have been begun in the fifteenth century. It is now a ruin.

Ruthin is a large and populous town on the Clwyd, commanding an extensive prospect into that charming vale: here is likewise an excellent grammar school. It was formerly protected with a Gothic castle, but the remains of it are very trifling.

About five miles from Ruthin we quitted the delightful vale of Clwyd.

A SKETCH

The original town stood upon this hill, and the walls of it are still visible; but at present the parish church only remains on its site which is the most elevated part of a larger church, with a nave and two aisles, which appears to have been begun in the fifteenth century. It is now a ruin. Rainin is a large and populous town on the Clwyd, commanding an extensive prospect into that charming vale: here is likewise an excellent grammar school. It was formerly protected by a Gothic castle, but the remains of it are very trifling.

2 JUL 58

About five miles from Rainin we entered the delightful vale of Clwyd. The vale is bounded by high mountains, and is a most fertile and beautiful country. The Clwyd river flows through it, and the scenery is most picturesque. The vale is now a most fertile and beautiful country. The Clwyd river flows through it, and the scenery is most picturesque.

A SKETCH

TOUR
OF
CAERNARVONSHIRE,
WITH A
SKETCH
OF ITS
HISTORY,
AND THAT OF
ANGLESEA.

T O U R

CHESTER MANUSCRIPT

W. H. A.

H O M E



R. H.

AND THE

MANUSCRIPTS

TOUR
OF
CAERNARVONSHIRE
AND
ANGLESEA.

THE length of Caernarvonshire is nearly sixty miles; but the breadth in the broadest part does not exceed twenty. The number of its inhabitants has never been calculated with any exactness; yet the general opinion is, that it contains twenty thousand.

This county claims precedency to every other in Wales, for the loftiness of its mountains, and the multi-

tude of its eminences. They occupy almost the whole extent, in a curved, serrated chain, from the promontory of Ormshead easterly to Bardsey Isle, a ragged rock in the west. All the space is abundantly diversified with bare and stupendous elevations, with wide gaping chasms of savage aspect, with pleasant incurvations of some fertility, with rich bottoms, and some abrupt and some gentle slopes and swells. Its antiquity is necessarily obscure; and the historical accounts of the county, prior to the commencement of the eighth century, furnish no satisfactory register of events. The improved parts of the county now occupy nearly the half of the superficies; and perhaps in ages to come almost the whole surface, wherever any mould is left, may be brought to a state of artificial
pasturage,

pasturage, if not of cumbersome tillage.

The mountains in the space from Conway to Caernarvon seem embosomed in one another; but from the Anglesea shore they assume a more regular appearance, range rising upon range in three gradations. The lower valleys and sides to the first swell are in general fertile, temperate, and habitable. The second range affords pasturage and fuel, such as long grass, peat, and furze. The highest ridge comprises in it the nature of the frigid zone; the air is keen and rarefied, and snow usually prevails there more than half the year. When it rains mildly in the lower districts of the mountain, it oftentimes snows with severity on the heights.

Llanrwst, where the traveller by way of Shrewsbury first enters this

delicious vale: the side down the hill, upon the opening of it, is striking beyond imagination; the Caernarvonshire side, rising suddenly to a great height, impresses the mind not accustomed to abrupt scenes of nature with astonishment and delight. This small town is situated near the southern extremity of the vale on the banks of the river Conway, which divides this county from that of Denbigh. The place is celebrated for its bridge, which consists of three arches, the middle of which is elliptical, and is the admiration of strangers, and worthy of the great architect Inigo Jones. The vale, which is of no great extent, widens in succession to its termination at Conway; and a noble river, capable of receiving small craft, runs the whole length of it.

Near

Near Llanbeder, from the road, is seen a roaring cataract ; the fall is not altogether perpendicular, but the inclination is nearly so ; and the whole body of water, which in floods is considerable, appears all foam, from its agitation with opposing rocks. On the left is Caerhun, so called from Rhyn ap. Maelgwyn Gwyneth, who lived here about the sixth century.

At this part of the river, called Tal y Cafn, is a flat ferry conveyance from one shore to the other.

The town of Conway, before noticed, is pleasantly situated on a gentle ascent over the estuary of that name. It is so called from the British words Kyn and Wy, which signify the head or chief river. For a further account of this place, see Tour from Holyhead, &c. p. 94.

Though *Snowdon* has been before mentioned, (see p. 31) the following account is so extremely interesting, that I flatter myself it will be acceptable to the reader :

This is the most noted eminence in the whole region of the Welch hills, and may with propriety be styled the British Alps. The top, by way of pre-eminence, is termed y Wyddfa, that is the *conspicuous*; for from this height the visible horizon cannot be less than a thousand miles. The summit is a plain of about six yards in circumference; and from hence may be seen a part of Ireland, of Scotland, and of England, Cumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, and all North Wales, the Irish and British seas, and lakes innumerable. Such a bountiful display of nature at once astonishes and charms the beholder. Tancred Robinson makes the height

1200 yards; but Mr. Pennant, perhaps nearer the truth, sets it at 1189 yards. But what is this altitude to that of Mont Blanc, or Cotopaxi? The former measures two thousand four hundred and twenty-six toises, and the latter three miles perpendicular height. To ascend Snowdon is no easy exercise; it requires some resolution and activity to clamber rocks, and skip over bogs: yet persons on horseback have been known to reach the summit with a degree of safety. All pleasures are attended with fatigue. Once, in ascending this king of hills, I found myself uncommonly weary at the end of the journey: having put on boots for warmth, they not only retarded expedition, but rendered the footing less firm and secure. The night is usually chosen to begin the ascension, in order to be at the apex at sun-rising,

which is a prospect uncommonly magnificent, if the morning be clear. I left Caernarvon at five P. M. and arrived leisurely at the base of the mountain a little before eight, in the month of August. The azure now promised no fair weather, it being hazy, and the wind high. However, from this hopeful circumstance I learned some operations of nature, which I should have missed, had the sky appeared without a cloud. Quellyn lake exhibited a surface boisterous to a degree that I had never observed before in fresh water: like a tempestuous sea, the billows foamed and roared. The wind rushing along the interstices of the mountains, and being pent from expanding, exerted itself in an incredible degree of fury. Here one had no occasion

—————"to invoke the winds

"To break the toils where strangled vapours lie."

Storms frequently prevail in the defiles of the mountains; the wind, rushing between them through a narrow channel, at once increases in speed and density. I rested the beginning of the night at a small farmhouse among the rocks: to begin to ascend it was too soon. At twelve P. M. I eagerly proceeded with a guide, and arrived at the top, without any material occurrence of observation, about three in the morning. The dawn of day now appeared, and there was something very awful and impressing in the situation. Nature looked tremendous and frowning, and the atmosphere was every moment putting on a different aspect: at one instant the sky was clear, the next overcast with clouds: now a misty rain, then fair weather. The

transition was uncommonly quick and perceptible, until the sun became visible in the horizon. Never shall I forget the horror and the pleasure I then felt. He appeared to come forth from the ocean in fiery redness, and like a giant to run his course. A pure azure for a few minutes now displayed itself with refulgent beauty. The clouds were forming fast underneath, and the wind being brisk, soon carried them over head: and with such rapidity were they impelled from the great chasm of Llanberis, that they seemed to rise like smoke out of a great furnace. Now and then the beams or rays of sun darted from between the clouds like lightening, flashing upon the adverse rocks. The multitude of lakes in these mountains, and the humidity of the soil, bring on these phenomena. When the sun had ascended.

ascended some degrees, the sky brightened ; but the exhaled vapours appeared visible, and sometimes are so through the course of the day. Goats are not unfrequent on some of the most inaccessible cliffs, and sheep on all easy acclivities. Though you are here within an hour's ride of an hospitable and social people, yet the ideas of waste and solitude unavoidably prevail. The elevation of your footing is so unusual to the mind, that while you survey the amazing prospect with astonishment and admiration, you tremble at the contemplation of the slippery situation you are in. Anglesea displays or unfolds itself to you like a map, and you can plainly discern its windings, crooks, and bays, Man's power is diminished, and even debased in his own eyes, at the gran-

deur and greatness of the scenes before him.

One of the curiosities of Caernarvonshire is Pont Aberglaslyn, a bridge which joins this county to Merionethshire. It is remarkable for a salmon-leap close by it, and famous for its site, being an arch thrown from one hill to another. The country hereabouts is uncommonly romantic and wild, rising on either side into abrupt precipices; and the noise of the river, in the wintry deluge, is uncommonly loud, though the stream in its usual progress is never very silent and placid, from the number of dark loose blocks of stone in every direction of the river, hurled into it from the circumjacent hills. The road from Caernarvon to the bridge, the distance about twelve miles, is hard, spacious, and sufficiently level for wheel-carriages;

carriages ; in consequence of which, and the picturesque scenes all along the ride, the place is much resorted to in the summer season.

The church of Beddgelert, a small neat structure, is situated close to the river, and surrounded by towering mountains. Behind the public house, opposite a mill, is a grand sublime view of the majestic ; height, greatness, and confusion, encircle the spectator. To the east is a solemn hollow, rugged with rocks, and savage with huge excrescences. The eye, in the survey of this horrid chasm, is relieved now and then by spots of verdure, by patches of heath, by thinly scattered sheep, and by the beautiful curvature of the mountain. This is an excellent stand to take a landscape of naked nature ; having received no embellishment from the industry of man, it exhibits a surface

face desolate and deserted. It is very probable all this part of the country was covered with trees, and the covert of wolves, and other beasts of the forest. In the Welch annals this region is styled the forest of Snowdon.

The mountains of Caernarvonshire run in a bent line from sea to sea. The east point is a headland, called Ormshead, the west Aberdaron. The defiles and openings that give these mountains a passage, have all been strongly fortified, either with castles, towers, or forts. Deganwy castle stands at the opening at Conway; Caerhun at the pass of Bwlch y Ddau Vaen, with a fort below at Aber; Dol y Felin castle and a watch-tower at Nant Frankon; Dolbadern at Nant Peris: at Criccieth is a strong castle; and at Castell Gyfarch

Gyfarch a watch-tower; and a fort at Dolbenmaen.

The ridges of Caernarvonshire are, in some places, notches by great gaps, or narrow valleys. Here are mountains of many sorts, and of different origin. Some are composed of shells, sand, and spar, and of pebbles; or all together cemented by a natural gluten. Others appear to be the production of subterraneous fire.

The inequality also of the ranges of the mountains is often the effect of a sliding of a part of the hill: the great incumbent weight on a rapid inclination overbalances the equilibrium, and frost and floods help to unstate the mass.

All mountains are abundant in springs and rivers; and the reason is obvious, they serve as an alembic. Their power of attraction is considerable,

rable, and in proportion to their height they intercept the flying vapours and clouds, which, finding resistance, trickle down their sides in water, and form lakes of great depth; and from these conservatories rivers are formed, and fountains derive their origin.

South-west of Caernarvon are those very observable hills called Rivles. They are all conical, and of great height: they extend in a beautiful towering order, almost to the western extremity of the county. Elevations of this form are supposed to be the effect of subterraneous fire.

Dinas Dinlle, about four miles south-west of Caernarvon, is an artificial mount of gravel and earth, close to the sea shore. This is conjectured to have been a British camp or fortification; but Mr. Pennant judges it to have been a Roman fortress;

trefs ; and, to corroborate this supposition, a coin of Aleetus was found here.

Clynog.—This place is famous for having been a college, which was founded by Beuno, son of Bavagius. King Cadwallader and Prince Anarawd were considerable benefactors to the church, which is Gothic, and the handsomest in the county : the architecture, though upon a smaller scale than that of Bangor, seems superior to the cathedral in style of building.

As this village is about midway between the towns of Caernarvon and Pwllheli, it has one tolerably good inn. The country from hence to Pwllheli is, in general, dreary and barren, but with here and there a gentleman's house, around which the ground for a little way puts on a more cultivated appearance ; yet, on
the

the whole, sterility superabounds. The pass to the entrance of Llyn is called Drws Daufyndd, a narrow avenue, defended by two lofty mountains. A. D. 945, Aliboc wasted this country; and again, soon after, Constantine with the Danes ravaged it; and at a place called Gwaith Hirberth the Danes were overthrown, and Constantine was slain.

The town of Pwllheli is situated close to the sea, and consists of one main street and some lanes: it is a place of considerable trade in corn, butter, cheese, and in ship-building: it has the cheapest market of any seaport town in North Wales.

At Penmorfa several antiquities are scattered about this part of the country. Near Dolbenmaen is a large mount, on which, it is conjectured, there has been a watch-tower.

Near

Near Ystemgegid are three cromlechs; and in the neighbourhood of Clennenny is a druidical circle, consisting of thirty-eight stones.

Nevin is a small market town on the sea coast, where the English nobility celebrated the memory of King Arthur, A. D. 1284. The herring fishery is carried on here to much advantage.

Crickieth is a small borough town, contributory to Caernarvon: it has a castle, which is seated on a round hill jutting far into the sea, and the isthmus is crossed by two deep ditches. On either side of the entrance is a great round tower: its supposed founder is Edward the First, but Mr. Pennant suspects it to be of British architecture.

Evioneth is a hundred of the south-west of Caernarvonshire: it is supposed to have obtained this name from

from its being watered by a number of small rivers.

Bardsey Island, called in Welch Ynys Enlli, is situated at the extremity of Caernarvonshire, celebrated in former times as a religious asylum : it is about two miles in circumference, and contains a few inhabitants. Here a beautiful red stone is dug, which will take a fine polish.

The productions of Caernarvonshire are neither very abundant nor various, yet more than sufficient, with good husbandry, to supply the inhabitants. The soil for the most part is raw and shallow : even the valleys and bottoms seem to be only the shattered refuse of the mountains, consisting chiefly of loose stones, some earth, and some vegetable remains. Where the land is thoroughly

roughly manured and meliorated, it produces good corn.

The air of the upper mountains is keen, and oftentimes piercing: the valleys are more temperate; and about the skirts of the hills, and near the influence of the sea air, it is milder still. Snow seldom continues long in the lower regions; in the higher regions it usually maintains a contest with the sun for more than six months in the year.

The weather in North Wales is very changeable, and subject to rains, as all hilly countries on the side of the tropics are: the clouds, intercepted by the hills, discharge their contents against them, and so deluge or water the intermediate spaces; yet the variation of the thermometer is never great; 30 usually is the lowest, and 75 the highest, a difference of 45 only: the medium is 44.

The

The Welch music is harmonious, but plaintive, slow, and affecting. The tunes were chiefly composed to celebrate the glory of the heroes of their country, or to bewail their losses, and to stir up a spirit of liberty in the people: although alliteration is a characteristic of the Welch song, they have very few tunes in allegro.

Of instruments, the harp, the crowd, and pib-corn, are peculiar to the Welch. The first needs no description; the second is similar to the base viol, but with six strings, and played with the bow in the same manner: the pib-corn is a fluted bore, with six stops, and a hollow horn at each end; the mouth-piece is a reed or quill: the tone has some affinity to that of the bagpipe.

Of minstrels there were three sorts formerly in Wales. First, the bards, who

who composed songs and odes of various measures. Second, such as played upon musical instruments. Third, *Ateaniad*, whose business it was to sing to the instrument played upon by another: each of these Grif-fydd ap Conan, about A. D. 1136, reformed and corrected.

ISLE

OF

ANGLESEA.

PORTH Althwy, the most general ferry into Anglesea, is immediately below the church.

The account given by Tacitus of the expedition of Suetonius against this island is the most striking picture of the character of the Druids, and probably more to be relied upon than any other.

The shore from Porthamel is famed for being the place where he landed, and put an end in this island to the Druid reign.

The Danes frequently invaded Anglesea; and between the years 969
and

and 972, Godfryd, the son of Harold, subdued the whole island.

Very few traces of the temples and habitations of the Druids are now to be found; some old stones, shapeless and without order, here and there, indicate that there might have stood on these spots the rude and simple piles where the primæval inhabitants of this island solemnised their religious ceremonies; and this is all that now remains of that once celebrated order of priesthood, which overspread the northern regions of Europe. Strange fatality! that little more than a few shapeless stones, and the uncertain testimony of oral tradition, remain to satisfy us of the influence that extraordinary religion once possessed over the human mind.

At Tre'r Dryw, or the habitation of the *Arch-Druid*, I met with the mutilated remains described by Mr.

Rowland in his History of Anglesea. His Brein Gwyn, or royal tribunal, is a circular hollow of 180 feet in diameter, surrounded by an immense agger of earth and stones, evidently brought from some other place: it has only a single entrance. This is supposed to be the grand consistory of the Druidical administration.

Here are also the reliques of a circle of stones, with the cromlich in the midst, but all extremely imperfect.

Their ceremonies, according to Tacitus, were performed “in groves, “sacred to the most cruel superstitions; for they offered up their sacrifices upon altars stained with the blood of their captives; and it was usual for them to augur according as the blood of the human victim

“victim followed the sacred knife
“that had inflicted the wound.”

Though Anglesea is called the granary of Wales, it appeared to us as unworthy the appellation; for twenty miles of our road through it, we could not discover more than five or six corn fields, and the grass lands so miserably poor, that it starved rather than fed its hungry inhabitants. We undoubtedly did not see the country to the best advantage, because the excessive heat of the summer had parched up the ground, and occasioned a general appearance of dearth.

Amlwch is a small sea port, from whence the copper (that is found in the Paris and Mona mines, which are not more than a mile from the town) is shipped to London, Liverpool, &c. The Mona mine produces the finest ore; they also make

quantities of copper from old iron (for a particular account of the whole process, see the Scotch Encyclopedia, and Pennant's History of Wales.)

At Llanidan is the seat of Lord Boston, finely situated on that arm of the sea, commanding, upwards, a beautiful prospect of Caernarvon and Snowdon hills. The church adjacent was built in 1535.

Plas Newydd, the seat of Sir N. Bayley, lies close upon the water, protected on three sides by venerable oaks and ashes. The view up and down this magnificent river-like strait, is extremely fine.

A little below Plas Newydd, on the Caernarvonshire side, appear the extensive woods of Vaenol, with the old house of the same name.

At Craig y Ddinas I was irresistibly delayed by feasting my eyes with

with the fine view of the noble curvature of the *Menai*.

We dined at Gwyndn, on the great road to Holyhead, which is called by the natives *Caer Guby*, on account of St. Kybi, a holy man, who lived there A. D. 308. We left it on the right, and steered our course nearly south, through the centre of the island. Gwyndn signifies, from its name, a place of hospitality at the expense of the lord; and it answers, in some respects, to its title even now; nor must I forget to pay my tribute of thanks to the hostess, a fine old lady, who paid us the utmost attention, and appeared particularly solicitous about us. We left this hospitable inn with regret, and arrived at Hoel Don Ferry, which we crossed, after a sleepless night, happy to quit this rather inauspicious island.

with the fine view of the noble city
of Cardiff.
We then went to the castle on the
great road to Haverfordwest, which is
called by the name of Cardigan.
on account of St. Idris, whose tomb
who lived there A.D. 570.
and the castle and church are
quite new, built through the
labours of the third Governor of
the town, who built a place of fort-
ification at the expense of the town
and it is now a fine specimen
of the new town, not only
stronger but a place of beauty to
the eye, a fine old lady, who
lived in the castle, and
appeared in the town, and
was the first and noblest man with
a sword, and a sword at Haverford
and we were called, and
the castle is happy to give the
castle to the town.

TOUR

FROM

ROSS to BALA,
DENBIGH, and ST. ASAPH.

K 4

T O U R



DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE

X

T O U R

FROM

ROSS to BALA, &c.

WE slept at the King's Arms at Ross, which was formerly the habitation of that celebrated character who usually goes by the name of the "Man of Ross." He was truly a friend to the human kind. He gave his worldly goods, as far as they would go, to the unfortunate; and his best wishes and unqualified compassion to all; his memory is still revered, and his loss still lamented.

Written upon a Window Shutter.

Here dwelt the Man of Ross. O traveller, here
 Departed merit claims the rev'rend tear;
 Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health;
 With generous joy he view'd his modest wealth.
 If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheer'd moments pass,
 Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass,
 To higher zest shall mem'ry wake thy soul,
 And virtue mingle in th' ennobled bowl.
 Here cheat thy cares---in generous visions melt,
 And dream of goodness thou hast never felt.

Montgomery, our next stage, is a neat town, and pleasantly situated; except St. Asaph, it is one of the smallest capital towns in the king's dominions. In the neighbourhood of Welch Pool, upon a most beautiful eminence, stands Powis castle.*

The road from thence to Llanvilling is very intricate, and we contrived to lose our way more than

* See p. 60 for an account of this castle.

once,

2 JY 58



Underwood Sculp.

A Cottage at Bala Lake.

Published April 24, 1797, by G. Sael. N. 192. Strand.

once, notwithstanding we had been told it was as straight as an arrow.

We were much diverted with the whole of our journey to Llanvilling, particularly with the small but pleasant river Verniew, which we crossed.

Llangunnog is singularly situated, surrounded on all sides by barren and sandy hills. The place consists only of a few houses, amongst which there is a small building ycleped a church, where once a week a sermon is delivered in the Welch language.

Bala* is situated upon the borders of a large lake, eleven miles in circumference, and four and a half long. The country round is grand and sublime, but not interesting; stupendous mountains seem "to mix their heads with dropping clouds," but with respect to cultivation, or even verdure, they are entirely destitute.

* See plate.

It was late in the evening when we left Bala, and therefore, contrary to our intention, we took up our quarters for the night at the Druid house, a solitary place only eight miles distant from that which we had last quitted; and early the following morning we pursued our journey to Llangollen. The face of the country now became more interesting. The scene gradually assumed a less rugged appearance; the dark brown mountain, and the desolated heath, softened by distance, formed a beautiful contrast to the wild and irregular scenery that succeeded. We felt our spirits, which had before been depressed from the barren and gloomy country we had traversed, now much exhilarated, and we seemed to breathe a freer air.

Our road wound along the banks of the river Dee, which falls mur-

muring over its pebbled bed at the foot of the mountains, whose steep sides are covered with wood of the largest growth, here and there the shaggy rock, more than half concealed by the surrounding foliage, peering its broken summit beyond the most extended branches, and threatening, by its fall, to obstruct the course of the river beneath; whilst the spreading beach tree and mountain ash are found in great abundance upon its banks, dipping their slender branches in the stream.

Llangollen is most delightfully situated.*

There are two roads from Llangollen to Wrexham, one on each side of the river Dee; the best is that on the right, which we took, but it is

* See p. 54 for a particular account of this place.

rather

rather the longest. The road is carried upon the high grounds, from whence the prospect is delightful. The river, winding through the valleys, sometimes intercepted by a rising ground or thick wood, then opening full upon the view, the luxuriance of nature is richly displayed through the whole landscape.

On the other side, the river, stealing through the valley, had, by its overflowing, contributed to give it the richest appearance of fertility; in some places the mower, almost buried under the high grass, often paused from his labour: in others, the sharp sound of the grinding stone, the loud laugh, or toil-subduing song, were frequently heard: on the sides of the opposite hills were scattered the modest hamlets that owned these industrious peasants; behind

behind us, at some distance, the whitened spire, and part of the little town we had left, were still visible; whilst over all, the setting sun cast its softened tints, a part of the valley only being shaded by the interposition of a neighbouring mountain, whose summit still retained in glowing colours the last rays of the departing day.

About half way from Llangollen to Wrexham, we crossed a bridge where the two roads meet, and then we bad adieu to the river Dee, which kept its course afterwards to the right of us. Wrexham is a large, populous, and well-built town.*

From Wrexham our road became less interesting, and for ten or twelve miles presented nothing to recompense the fatigue of a long and tedious walk, until we had ascended a

* See p. 52 for an account of this place.

very high hill, when the vale of Clwyd, in all its beauty, unfolded upon the sight: it appeared like a moving picture, upon which nature had been prodigal of its colours. Hamlets, villages, towns, and castles, rose like enchantment upon this rich carpet, that seemed covered with wood and inclosures; in the midst of it, at the distance of about five miles, the town of Ruthin partially appeared from the bosom of a most beautiful grove of trees; the vale on each side being bounded by a chain of lofty mountains, and far off, on a bold and rugged promontory, stood Denbigh, with its fortress, the undisputed mistress of this extended scene. The great defect of the vale is its want of water; the little river Clwyd, which winds through it, not being perceptible at any distance.

We

We dined at Ruthin, and reached Denbigh the next evening. This town is well built, and the principal street, which is on the slope of the hill, is broad and clean, and the accommodations good. After tea we took a walk to view the castle, whose venerable walls, rising high above the town, command a magnificent view of the whole vale.

It was built in the reign of Edward the First, and garrisoned in the time of Charles the First by the royalists, but was obliged to surrender to the parliament army after a gallant and vigorous defence; the breaches in the walls are vast, and serve to shew the strength and thickness of their construction. The royal and unfortunate fugitive, Charles the First, after his retreat from Chester, took up his abode for one night in this castle.

Denbigh

Denbigh is more of a venerable than a magnificent ruin, and would of itself have amply repaid me for all the fatigue I had undergone; I would not willingly exaggerate the accounts of what I have seen, or endeavour to paint things otherwise than as they really are.

Viewing the castle, nothing could be more awfully grand than the scene before me, which I surveyed with a degree of admiration not totally destitute of a superstitious fear. The venerable appearance of the whole fabric; walls and battlements rising in ruined majesty; broken arches, half covered by the creeping ivy and enchanters night-shade; high Gothic windows, which but displayed the horrible gloom that reigned within; the mouldering tower, shook by every storm, affording an asylum to the owl and the bat,

bat ; whilst the moon bursting from a dark cloud, threw a partial gleam upon the pile, and served by its feeble light to discover the deep gloom of the remoter parts.*

UPON THE RUINS OF
DENBIGH CASTLE.

Proud pile ! thy tempest-beaten towers, that rear
Their heads sublime, and to the angry storm
Bid bold defiance, though their aged brows
Bear visible the marks of stern decay ;
While superstition, with a phrensy'd eye,
And wildering fear, that horrid forms surveys,
Affright the lonely wanderer from thy walls.

Far hence, thou busy world, nor here intrude
Thy sounds of uproar, arguing much of care
And impotent alarms ; behold, fond man,
This feeble monument of mortal pride,
Where time and desolation reign supreme
With wildest havoc---o'er the solemn scene

* This town has been noticed in p. 164 ; the reason for giving it a place again, was from the description being more enlarged, and probably more accurate, therefore we trust it will not be less satisfactory to the reader on that account.

In silence pause, and mark this pictur'd truth;
That not alone the proudest works of man
Must perish; but as this tow'ring fabric,
That lifts its forehead to the storm, till time
And the wild winds shall sweep it from its base;
Pass but a few short hours---the dream of life
Is fled, and to the cold grave sinks man's faded form.

We quitted Denbigh with great reluctance, and often looked back upon its venerable ruins, contrasting them in different situations with the surrounding objects. Intervening hills had scarcely shut them from our view, before we entered upon a wide common, from whence a delightful prospect (terminated only by the sea) lay extended before the eye; on the edge of the common ran the rapid river Elwy, which we crossed, over a very beautiful bridge, with one noble arch.—The view of the river, with its rocky shore, excavated in the most romantic manner—and the simple cottage, embosomed with-
in

in the dark wood that rose above it, formed an interesting perspective section through the arch of this bridge.

St. Asaph is a small neat town.*

* See p. 44 for a description of this town.

TOUR

in the water tower the water is
found in the water tower
which is a water tower
which is a water tower
which is a water tower

T O U R

FROM

SHREWSBURY TO OSWESTRY,

ELLESMERE, BANGOR, MOLD,

AND

FLINT.

T O U R

FROM



AND

FLINT.

TOUR

FROM

SHREWSBURY to OSWESTRY,

BANGOR, MOLD, and FLINT.

THE town of Shrewsbury is seated within a peninsula, with ground finely sloping in most parts to the river. The castle was judiciously placed on a narrow isthmus 200 yards wide, which connects it to the main land: Roger de Montgomery made this his principal seat. The town was not defended by walls till

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the

the year 1219. There are many historical evidences of the antiquities of the town, to which I must refer the reader for more particulars to Philips's History of Shrewsbury.

Near the town is the Upper and Lower Berwick; one the seat of — Betton, Esq. the other, of T. Powis, Esq. both commanding delicious views of the river and town of Shrewsbury.

The ride from Shrewsbury to Oswestry is, in many parts, picturesque and beautiful. Those mountains, that have often terrified from their stupendous height, now break forth with awful and sublime effect upon the eye of the traveller, whilst the fertile vales, screened from the tempest, bud and blossom at their feet.

“Wasting their sweetness on the desert air.”

GRAY.

The

The immediate road to Oswestry is by Bickton, Great Nefs, and Knockin.

Oswestry.—A considerable town about two miles distant from Whittington, a place celebrated in Saxon history and legendary piety. On this spot, on August 5, 642, was fought the battle between the Christian Oswald, king of the Northumbrians, and the Pagan Penda, king of the Mercians. Oswald was defeated and lost his life. At present, there is not a relique of any old building, excepting the ruins of a chapel, over a remarkably fine spring, that still bears the name of the Saint; near the church is a spot moated round, the use of which is now quite unknown. The present church is of no great antiquity, is spacious, and has an handsome plain tower. We learn from a monument in me-

mory of Mr. Hugh Yale, that the old church was demolished in 1616. The town was fortified with a wall and four gates; that called the Black Gate is demolished; the New Gate, the Willow Gate, and the Beatrice Gate, still remain. The last is an handsome building, with a guard-room on both sides; and over it the arms of the Fitz-alans, a lion rampant. There are only a few fragments of the castle remaining.

Sir William Dugdale says, that there was a castle at Oswaldstcr, at the time of the conquest, which I think probable; lastly, it had its chapel placed at a little distance, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, and was in the gifts of the Earls of Arundel. This town was garrisoned for the King in the beginning of the civil wars, but was taken in June 1644 by

by the Earl of Denbigh and General Mytton.

About a mile from Ofwestry, in the parish of Sellatyn, lies a fine military post on an insulated eminence, of an oblong form, which has been fortified with much art.

In Sellatyn parish is Parkington, the seat of R. G. Owen, Esq. This place takes its name from a singular intrenchment in a neighbouring field. Sir J. Owen, the famous royalist, was of this house, but not of the family.

From Ofwestry we may continue our journey to Ellesmere. From an eminence called the Perthy, you have a most extensive view of the flat part of the country, bounded by the hills of Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, and Shropshire; amidst them appear the vast gaps through which the Severn and the Dee rush upon the

L 3

plains

plains out of their mountainous confinement. This track is intermixed with woods, fertile lands, and moors of great extent.

Alston is situated on an elevated spot of ground ; a very extensive wood flanks each side of the house, which is bounded by a fine piece of water, made by extending the banks of the river Perry.

Ellesmere is a town situated on a lake of an hundred and one acres in dimension, and whose greatest depth is twenty-six yards, well stocked with fish. The Duke of Bridgewater owns this fine water.

The environs have two advantages superior to the other lakes. A good town borders on one side ; the fine park of Ockle, or Ollby, with the venerable wooden house, is a great ornament to the other.

The park is covered with trees of great size and ancient growth. A
vast

vast lime tree, of the small leaved variety, is particularly conspicuous. The ground is finely broken into several risings, and the views of the town, of the Mere, and of the two others, Whilemere and Colemere, render this a first rate situation.

The town is of Saxon origin, and takes its name from the water, which was called Aelfmere.

The castle stood on a vast artificial mount, on a rising ground, with three great ditches on the more accessible side; at present not a vestige is to be seen.

Our next stage may be to Overton, a pleasant village, seated on an high bank, about a mile beyond the bridge, above a rich meadowy flat of a semicircular form, varied by the Dee, and bounded in front with fertile and wooded slopes; while the lofty and naked mountains soar beyond and close the scene.

In 1278, in the reign of Edward the First, it was in possession of Robert de Crevecœur, who obtained for it a weekly market, held on a Wednesday. There are no reliques of the Castle, which stood in a field, still called Castlefield, fronting the Dee. The church is an handsome building, and the church-yard reckoned among the wonders of Wales, on account of its handsome yew trees. The epitaphs here are numerous, and many very curious.

Gwernhailed, the seat of Mr. Fletcher, in this parish, must not pass unnoticed. Few places command so rich a view, and few have been more judiciously improved: it stands on the lofty brow that skirts the country; beneath runs the Dee, bounded on the opposite side by most beautiful meadows, and varied in the distance by numbers of hills.

About

About five miles from Overton is Bangor, seated on the banks of the Dee, which is here bounded on both sides by rich meadows. The church has been built at different times, but no part very ancient. This place is celebrated for being the site of the most ancient British monastery, or rather seminary, which contained two thousand four hundred monks, who, dividing themselves into seven bands, passed their time alternately in prayer and labour. William of Malmesbury, the celebrated monk, cotemporary with King Stephen, speaks of the remains in his days, saying, "that no place could shew greater remains of half-demolished churches, and multitudes of other ruins, than were to be seen in his time."

This place has also been the site of the supposed Bonium, or Bovium, a Roman station. Leland says, that
in

in his time Roman money was found here. The bridge is a beautiful light structure, and consists of five arches.

On the road from hence to Wrexham stands Marchwail, celebrated for its antiquity. Arrive at Wrexham. This place has been mentioned before, vide page 52.

From Wrexham to Caergwrle is a pleasant ride.

Caergwrle, with Hope, is a prescriptive borough. The village and church of Hope lies about a mile from the castle, on the north side of the stream; the church is dedicated to St. Cynfar: there are some monuments of note in this church. West of the castle, on a lofty hill, is Bryn Yorkyn, the seat of Elis Yonge, Esq. The first charter given to Hope was by Edward the Black Prince, dated from Chester, 1351.

Abundant

Abundance of limestone is burnt into lime on Caergwile hill, a lofty mountain, composed of that species of stone, from which a vast trade is carried into Cheshire. From hence to Mold you pass Neefwood, the seat of Edward Warring, Esq. charmingly situated and well wooded. The village of Mold is pleasantly situated about ten miles from Chester: here the county assizes are held. About a mile west of the town is Maes Garman, a spot that still retains the name of the faintly commander, in the celebrated battle, the Victoria Alleluia-tica, fought in 420 between the Britons and Saxons, who were carrying desolation through the country.

At a small distance from Mold, on the road to Ruthin, is Fron, the paternal estate of the Rev. Mr. Williams, delightfully situated, commanding a rich prospect of well cultivated lands.

Northope, a small town, bears the addition of *North* to distinguish it from the other *Hope*. The church is dedicated to St. Peter; the body is long and embattled, the tower lofty and handsome.

Between the eight and nine milestone, about a quarter of a mile out of the Chester road, are the ruins of Eulo castle, placed on the edge of a deep wooded dingle. It is a small fortress, consisting of two parts; the towers of which are finely overgrown with ivy, and command the view of three wooded glens, deep and darksome, forming a most gloomy solitude.

In the woods near this place Henry the Second, in 1157, lost part of the flower of his army, being surprised and defeated by David and Conan.

The town of Flint (see p. 110 for another account of this town), is a place

place laid out with great regularity, but the streets far from being completed. The removal of the greater and the lesser sessions, and its want of trade, will be further checks to its improvement. This town gave name to the county, which, with that of Caernarvon, Merioneth, and Anglesea, composed the four ancient North Welch shires, formed by Edward the First, immediately after the conquest of the principality.

The town is formed on the principle of a Roman encampment, being rectangular, and surrounded with a vast ditch and two great ramparts, with four regular *partæ*, as usual with that military nation. The public buildings within this precinct are the church, the town-hall, and the jail, not one of which is any ornament to this little capital. The church, or rather chapel, is dedicated

to

to Saint Mary. The castle is a square building, with a large round tower at three of the corners, and a fourth a little disjointed from the other, and much larger than the rest. This is called the double tower: it had been joined to the castle by a drawbridge, and is of great thickness.

The founder of this castle is uncertain. Camden attributes it to Henry the Second. On the restoration it was resumed by the crown, among its other rights, in which it still continues. The crown governs it by a constable, who is likewise mayor of Flint.

The impending rocks which overhang the path in some parts of the lower road to Chester from hence, give a solemnity and beauty to the ride. The road is beside the river, which, at low water is nearly passable in some

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parts,

parts, though at full tide it measures five miles over. Hoyle Lake and Park Gate, on the opposite side, with the busy town of Liverpool, which from some points may be seen, and the vessels gently wafting commerce to our shores, all greatly enrich a scene that has been thus delineated by the poetical pencil of Miss Seward.

"Far on the right, the dim Lancastrian plains,

"In pallid distance, glimmer thro' the sky,

"Tho' hid by jutting rocks, thy splendid fanes,

"Commercial LIVERPOOL, elude the eye.

"Wide in the front the confluent oceans roll,

"Amid whose restless billows guardian HOYLE,

"To screen her azure LAKE when tempests howl,

"Spreads the firm texture of her amber * Isle."

† The *Sand Island*, which lying in the sea, a mile from shore, forms *Hoyle*, or *High Lake*.

NORTH

NORTH WALES

IS DIVIDED INTO SIX COUNTIES.

	Contents in square miles.	Towns.	Parishes.
Caernarvonshire	430	5	68
Denbighshire	670	4	57
Flintshire	250	2	28
Merionethshire	790	4	37
Montgomeryshire	860	6	47
Anglesea	180	2	74
	3180	23	311

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FINIS.

